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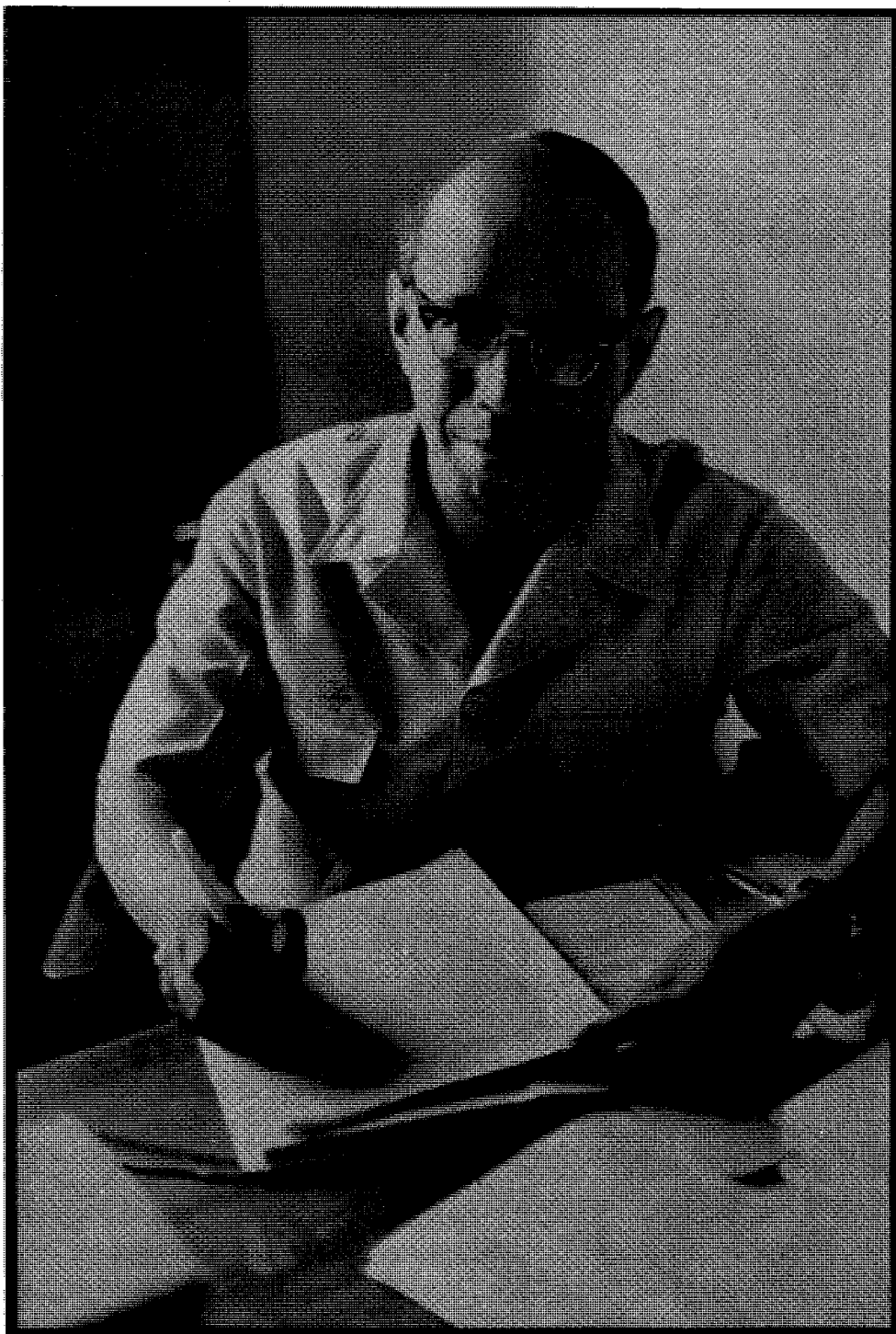
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Nirmal M. Tuladhar

Dhanavajra Vajracharya
(1932-1994)

IN MEMORY: DHANAVAJRA VAJRACARYA (1932-1994)

Dhanavajra Vajracarya was born on March 28, 1932 at his Masangalli house in Kathmandu as the youngest of the five sons to Tirtha Kumari and Durgavajra Vajracarya who was an Ayurvedic physician by profession. In 1948, at the age of 16, he was sent to a private school run by Pundit Nayaraj Pant, a Sanskrit scholar trained in Siddhanta Jyotisa and a self-taught historian of Nepal. Housed in the same locality, normally in this school young pupils came to study "some Sanskrit, some Mathematics and some Astrology," but not history. They began to take keen and vigorous interest in history only because of the Guru's enthusiasm.

Dhanavajra spent years in this school learning Sanskrit, reciting such texts as *Amarakośa*, *Kaumudi*, *Raghuvamśa* and, of course, Kautalya's *Arthaśāstra*. In the meantime, he picked up his main interest and principal tool of research in history, that is, his skills in epigraphy. In 1952, a group of young, like-minded and crusading students from the same school launched a campaign of rectifying factual errors in the popular textbooks of history. Through the publication and dissemination of more than 50 brief little pamphlets they exposed the factual errors in the works of the late Principal Bhairava Bahadur Pradhan, Surya Vikram Gyawali, Bala Chandra Sharma, and Dilli Raman Regmi. Dhanavajra was the member-secretary of this association known as the *Itihāsa Saṁśodhanamaṇḍala* during 1961-71. He remained active in the association during 1953-1971. It was quite common in those days to see young Dhanavajra selling those pamphlets on the footpaths at New Road and Tundikhel, calling the attention of the seemingly disinterested passers-by in energetic voice, reciting the points of errors or challenging the established names to come for a *śāstrārtha* (scholarly colloquium).

Almost as a consummation of this phase of his career, *Itihāsa-Saṁśodhanako Pramāṇ-aprameya*, Part I—a consolidated volume of these pamphlets—was edited by Dhanavajra and others in 1962 with a historical summary of their findings in a decade of academic crusade against established reputations. Although much of their polemical, and at times inflammatory, writing of this decade was focused more on destroying

reputations than in building their own through sustained piece of effort, Dhanavajra and his colleagues had contributed to the historiography of Nepal by drawing attention to the significance of epigraphic and documentary evidence.

During this time when Dhanavajra was busy as an activist-rectifier of mistakes in popular history textbooks, he also edited and published a number of significant works of historical interest in collaboration with his colleagues. The prominent works of this period include editing of *Jayaratnākara*, a Sanskrit play by Saktivallabha Aryal (1957), *Abhilekha-Saṃgraha*, (1961-62), *Gallimā Phyāṅkieko Kasīngara* (1961) *Triratna-Saundarya-Gāthā* (1963) by Pundit Sundarananda Shakya, *Aitihāsika-patra-saṃgraha* Part I (1957) and Part II (1964). In 1964 he helped found the historical quarterly journal of the Samsodhana-mandala, *Pūṇimā*.

Like several of its original 21 members, Dhanavajra gradually dissociated himself from the activities of the Samsodhana-mandala, and he finally quit it in 1971. In the same year he joined Tribhuvan University Service as a member of the Research Cell in the newly established Nepala Adhyana Samsthana. This cell was in fact the nucleus of what was to be the Institute of Nepal and Asian. Studies which was founded in 1972 under the dispensation of the National Education System Plan. Because of his maturity and experience in research he was to be the mainstay of the Institute's research programmes in ancient and medieval history of Nepal. He was instrumental in conceiving, executing and successfully completing several projects and in brining out their results in published form including *Śri Bāburām Āchārya ra Vahankā Kriti* (1973).

Dhanavajra entered the field of history mainly through his mastery of epigraphy. He read the Licchavi and Kutala scripts, not to speak of other species of medieval Newari scripts, with ease and competence that few men in Nepal could match. Although he may have lacked a broader and comparative historical perspective of modern critical scholarship, his traditional erudition glowed with his knowledge of Sanskrit and enviable grasp of the archaic and classical Newari that was used in medieval writings, such as palm leaf inscriptions, and *thyāsaphus*, that is, contemporary historical diaries and journals kept by different individuals. He often used to say in personal conversation with his colleagues that some of his insights had been drawn from his acute intuitions. He did mere impassioned work in the Licchavi period and the times of King Prithvinarayan Shah. He was often so absorbed in his subject that he got never tired of talking on the subject of history, and even in casual conversations, he was full of historical anecdotes and analogies. He firmly believed in Nepal's tradition of religious syncretism and mutual respect between Buddhism and Hinduism.

Dhanavajra's most important work to come out of the Institute of Nepal and Asian Studies is the *Licchavikālakā Abhilekha* (1973). It is a collection of the then known inscriptions from ancient Nepal, transliterated in *devanāgarī* script, edited with Nepali translation of the Sanskrit inscriptions and detailed historical commentary, inscription by inscription. Today this single work makes Dhanavajra known to a wide national and international audience. No other work has become such an indispensable reference work for students and specialists alike. Most of his other works and publications sponsored by the Institute (later Centre) of Nepal and Asian Studies (CNAS) have also been works on history through epigraphy, i.e. inscriptions and documents discovered in the course of carrying out explorations in different parts of the country, particularly in and outside the Kathmandu valley. These include works on Tistung-Chitlang (1972), Gorkha (1972), Dolakha (1974), and Nuwakot (1975). He was one of the key-researchers in the IDRC-funded Mustang Project (1983-84) to which he contributed a historical portion. One of his more explicatory works of history has been on the *Pancālī* system of polity (1978) whose beginnings he traces to the Licchavi Period (ca. A.D. 464-879), but which, according to him, continued down the ages. He has also compiled and commented upon the inscriptions and documents of the Shah period (1980). In many of these works he has been assisted by his junior associates at the Centre whom he helped to train in the process. One of the ambitious projects which he conceived and tried to carry out with the support of the then Executive Director(s) of the Centre was the National History Project in five volumes. A greater part of writing of this national history project has been completed and published.

Close on the foot steps of his mentors Baburam Acharya, Yogi Narahari Nath, Naya Raj Pant, and Surya Vikram Gewālī, Dhanavajra was undoubtedly the foremost of his generation—a perceptive, consistent, dedicated and productive historian. He firmly believed in the written sources and political chronology as the infallible bedrock of historiography. This was his strength as well as weakness, as it were. Among the written sources he was most at home with inscriptions—his first love, and literary sources—particularly Sanskrit classic, such as Kautalya's *Arthśāstra*. He was so firm and consistent in his outlook that several of his views which he cherished as a young crusader in 1952 were vigorously advocated until 1993. (For example, during the "Mandala Festival" in 1993 he gave a paper on the meaning of *Nepālamanāla*, quoting Kautalya extensively to argue that the ancient State of Nepal was "almost as big as modern Nepal"). He rarely, if ever, deviated from his source materials. By upbringing and training he took the written word as an authority on its own.

Dhanavajra was almost like an oracle for most of us in the university campus. He was consulted and sought by the young and old alike to discuss various tangled issues of ancient, medieval or modern Nepalese history. Almost in a complete reversal of his youthful crusading role, in his more mellow years he never offended anyone with discouraging or critical opinion. More often than not, he offered constructive suggestions to his colleagues and younger scholars in his field. As an editor of *Contributions to Nepalese Studies* he was often embarrassed to have to reject or ask anyone to revise, paper offered for publication.

In his later years Dhanavajra was very receptive of criticism of his work, and he never reacted to adverse opinions of his work. He gladly accepted unmotivated criticisms whenever one could convince him.

Dhanavajra's essays on the Licchavi administration and polity, the Powerful Ramavardhans, the Doyas, the Kirata influence on Licchavi Period, the Licchavi settlements, the Age of the Mahapatras, the Malla Period Defence System, the Khasa Kingdom of the Karnali Region, the Inscriptions of the Early Years of Nepal Samvat, the Historical Significance of Nepala Samvat, and Sivadeva—a Famous Medieval King of Nepal, are indispensable readings for aspiring scholars and specialists of ancient and medieval history of Nepal. More than anything else, his work on ancient and medieval Nepal, particularly early medieval Nepal, had laid a sound foundation for political chronology.

At CNAS Dhanavajra completed a small project in 1980-81 on the transliteration, translation and interpretation of the most important medieval chronicle of Nepal, the *Gopālarājavarṇaśāvalī*. This was the text which the late Historian-Laureate of Nepal, Kharidar Baburam Acharya, "read for twelve years and understood very little". Its authoritative editing was the "foremost desideratum in the field of medieval Nepalese history and linguistics" because in the words of Luciano Petech "the text is of interest of first magnitude both for history and linguistics." Dhanavajra had devoted more than a decade to the deciphering and interpretation of this famous but little understood text. Reading it aloud every morning as one recites *Candī* or *Gītā*- or *Nāmasaṃgitī* he laboured on this complex text for years. The handwritten report of this project was dumped on the floor in his cubicle tucked under a pile of papers at CNAS before it was spotted by Malla in January 1984. Realising its value he contacted the Nepal Research Centre and got it published by Franz Steiner Verlag as a facsimile edition consisting of the plates, devanagari transliteration and Nepali translation by Dhanavajra, and an Introduction, an English translation and a glossary of Newari words by Malla. Although some reviewers have attacked this edition for "bad execution", "faulty transliteration, and translation" Dhanavajra's

efforts have laid a solid foundation for further textual and analytical work on this all-important text.

Dhanavajra was one of the few Nepalese recipients of the prestigious International Grant by the Toyoto Foundation, Japan. In 1986 he got a grant to compile, edit and translate about 1500 medieval inscriptions from Kathmandu, Patan, and Bhaktapur dated since the beinnings of Nepal Samvat to A.D.1769. He and his team, consisting of Mrs. Rukmini Onta and Mr. Tek Bahadur Shrestha, had collected the rubbings, transcribed them and in part translated several hundreds of these inscriptions into Nepali; before Dhanavajra's health began to decline and fail. This was one project which he had asked many to undertake from the early days of the Institute of Nepal and Asian Studies, and which he had taken to his heart. One of his last wishes and deep concerns has been the completion of this project which he hoped to complete and print with plates in a four-volume edition.

At the time of his death Dhanavajra held the position of Reader at the Centre. He was decorated with Gorkha Daksinabahu Class IV and Trisaktipatta Class IV by His Majesty the King of Nepal. He was also awarded the literary award Madan Puraskar in 1973 for his work on Licchavi inscriptions. He was a founder-editor of *Contributions to Nepalese Studies*, which he continued to edit since 1973.

Dhanavajra actively participated in the compilation and deliberations of a comprehensive dictionary of the Classical Newari. He was among the founder members of the Nepalabhasa Dictionary Committee (founded in 1980). He left it in 1984. He was also an active member of the Board of Trustees of the Asha Archives, a public library housing about 8000 Nepalese manuscripts and palm leaves. For more than forty years he published almost entirely in Nepali, and like the man his style was clear, without being dry, harsh, or pompous—unambiguous and unhindered with academic pretensions or trappings of any kind. It is only a fitting tribute to him to say that much of what we know today about our past is a shaft of gentle light coming from the workshop of this simple and dedicated man. Survived by his wife, three sons and a daughter, when he passed away in Bir Hospital, Kathmandu, while undergoing dialysis on Monday, July 4, 1994 we have lost a no small part of ourselves.

Prayag Raj Sharma
Kamal P. Malla

THE PROFANE NAMES OF THE SACRED HILLOCKS

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In analysing and interpreting the non-Sanskrit words encountered in the Sanskrit inscriptions of ancient Nepal (A.D. 464-879), four interrelated hypotheses have provided the main conceptual framework in my work (Malla, 1981; Malla, 1983a: and Malla, 1983b):

- a. the non-Sanskrit words in the running text of Sanskrit inscriptions provide valuable evidence for prehistoric tribal-Hindu ethnic contacts;
- b. mostly, these words belong to the Tibeto-Burman languages, basically, to proto-Newari from which the presentday Newari has developed;
- c. in the course of the Hindu political-cultural domination by the Licchavis (A.D. 464-879), the Thakurīs (A.D. 880-1200), and the Mallas (A.D. 1201-1769), the tribals were Hinduised or Sanskritised; and
- d. in the process, different species of tribal toponyms were Sanskritised, including the name of the country itself.

In the present paper we present some more evidence in support of our hypotheses. We look at the names of the hillocks, this time. The hillocks, like the water-sources, the rivers, and their confluences, are susceptible to veneration as sacred cult objects. The sanctification of the hillocks and mountains is a form of the veneration of high places. Mountains have been considered a seat of gods in most religious mythologies of the world. Mount Tabor in Palestine, Mount Fuji in Japan, Wu Tai Shan—the five-peaked mountain in China, Mount Kailash in South Asia, Chomolungma-Mother Goddess of the Valley, and Mount Olympus in Greece are each held in reverence in myth and religion of the land. Some of them enjoy a regular pilgrim traffic to, around, and up the mountain, especially to the summit. The mountain-cult often leads to the construction of religious structures,

either on mountains themselves as elevated sanctuaries, or on their foot, slopes, or in the immediate neighbourhood. The four most revered Vaiṣṇava shrines of the Nepal Valley are all situated on the hillocks or on their foot. The most celebrated Buddhist shrine—Svayambhū—too is situated on a hillock. Because of such high religious- cultural potency of hillocks and mountains, their names are equally susceptible to linguistic and cultural annexation by organised and formal religions.

Most names of the hillocks in and around the Valley may have been just graphic or descriptive in origin, with little or no implications in terms of religious semantics. As evidence for this hypothesis we submit a list of 16 toponyms (in Appendix A)-- all found in ancient Sanskrit inscriptions of the Nepal Valley and its environs, dated between A.D. 506-705. These toponyms have some common formal features. For example, *co*, *gum*, *gum-co*, or *rhi-co* as the common morphemic finals in the nominal compounds. A Sanskrit-Newari lexicon, *Amarakośa* dated NS 501/A.D. 1381, defines the Sanskrit word *kūṭa/śikhara* (peak) as *gum-co*. Some Tibeto-Burman languages of Nepal have comparable cognates, e.g. Kaike has *chwang*, Khaling has *cong*, and Jirel has *cu-cog*. For hill or mountain, modern Colloquial Tibetan has *ri*. All these data indicate that the 16 ancient toponyms are actually names of the hillocks--forested or otherwise. Secondly, they are all nominal compounds of Tibeto-Burman roots/stems. Thirdly, they represent early forms of Newari. In support of these contentions, we submit a list of hillock names in modern Newari which clearly retain the roots/stems *co*, *gum*, or *gum-co*.

Caṅgu, Icaṅgu, Sāmhagum, Jāmāco (Nāgārjun). Phūco, Theco, Holco, Chilañco, (pāhāno), Miguco, Nātalāco, Palākhaco (Palāñcok)

Our hypothesis that most non-Sanskritic toponyms in ancient inscriptions of Nepal are Tibeto-Burman and proto-Newari seems to have disturbed some historians of Nepal. For example, Regmi has recently written:

Whether the son-Sanskritic names are of the Mongolian (*sic*) family of languages or they belonged to a different family? What is the standard by which to judge their character? The mere fact of familiarity and identity both in the positive and negative sense is not enough. One must judge them by the structural pattern and meaning of the linguistic form concerned. But here none of the words we have

mentioned show characteristics of Mongolid strain by structure or meaning.

(Regmi, 1983:265)

This categorically negative conclusion of the noted historian of Nepal is worth analysing for several reasons. In the first place, Regmi doesn't seem to be aware of the distinction between the two English words *Mongolian* (i.e., of Mongolia, a country in Central Asia) and *Mongoloid* (an anthropological abstraction, a racial type). Secondly, he is sadly confused between Mongolian-Mongolid (race) and Tibeto-Burman (language-family). Thirdly, he talks about "Mongoloid strain" in structure or meaning, or about *the* structural pattern and meaning of *the* linguistic form concerned without identifying either in anyone of the nearly 250 non-Sanskrit words found in ancient inscriptions of Nepal. Finally, it was Regmi himself who, in a paper entitled "The Antiquity of the Newars of the Kathmandu Valley"-published in 1948 in the *Journal of the Bihar Research Society* Vol. XXXIV: pp. 49-59, wrote the following:

We have definite linguistic and archaeological proofs for the existence of (the Newars) as early as the fifth century A.D. by a reference to the Newari names in the inscriptions, which are maintained intact up till today. The various names like *gum-vihāra*, etc., are pure Newari derivatives. The language of inscriptions being Sanskrit, it may be inferred that Newari was thrown into background as up till now it is.

Why the vintage Regmi suffered a volte-face so late in the day is something that need not detain us for the moment.

II

The second part of the paper is focussed on the Hindu-Buddhist annexation or transformation of the tribal Tibeto-Burman/Newari names of the two most sacred hillocks of the Valley. The most sacred Buddhist monument-site of the valley is located on the hillock of Svayambhū, (west) as it is so-called today. The hillock of Caṅgu in the east is the most holy Vaiṣṇava monument-site in the Valley. In an inscription located in the site, dated NS 492/A.D. 1372 the hillock of Svayambhū is called *sā-mha-śikhara* (cow-body-hillock). Tibetan sources call this monument *śiṅ-kun*. *Sā-mha-gum* is also attested in the Sanskrit text of the famous 14th-century Nepalese chronicle--the *Gopālarāja-vamśāvalī* (folio 26b:line 2). The loaded Sanskrit

name *padmācala-śikhara* occurs in an inscription dated NS 533/A.D. 1513, to be followed by *Gosringa* and *Gopuccha* in other texts. The process of the transformation of the Tibeto-Burman *Sā-mha-gum* (a hillock resembling a reclining body of the cow) into *Padmācala*, *Gosringa*, and *Gopuccha* is explained in a Buddhist text. In *Svayambhū Purāṇa*-- a version dated NS 778/A.D. 1758 (folio 2b: lines 1-3, verses 49-52) the following explanation is offered:

O Jinaśrī, Listen. There is a mountain called *Gopuccha*, situated in Nepal, along the northern Himalaya. With the passing of each aeon, the name of the mountain also underwent changes. In the Satya Yuga, it was called *Padmagiri*. In the Tretā Yuga, it was named *Vajrakūṭa*. In the Dvāpara Yuga, it was known as *Gosringa*. In the present Kali Yuga, it is called *Gopuccha*. The inhabitants of Nepal have their own name for it, and they call it *Sā-mha-gum*.

Clearly, the religious conception of the sequence of four ages has provided a handy framework to hold and justify each of the Sour names, assigning by implication the non-Sanskrit name to the most inferior of the four ages, i.e., the Iron Age. In the Śrī-Lankan *Māhāvamāda*, too, the island is said to have four different names in four ages. This extract from the Buddhist text is a most powerful piece of evidence to show how the profane or mundane tribal toponyms are annexed and sanctified by the ideologues of organised and formal religions.

In many ways, the Buddhist text offers a far better explanation for the name of its monument-site than the Vaiṣṇava commentary on the hillock name *caṅgu(m)*. In the *Gopālarāja-vamśāvalī*, there is a curiously belaboured passage--doubtlessly an interpolation--which seeks to interpret the Vaiṣṇava hillock-name:

Śrī Viṣṇutīrthanārāyaṇa, founded initially by King Viṣṇugupta with the desire to conquer enemy's lands, is called *Ye-Caṅgum* (*Ye* = south). Then *Caṅgum Nārāyaṇa* was founded because there was famine. Then there was affluence. This is called *Yo-Caṅgum* (*Yo* = west). The Viṣṇunābha was founded to produce wealth (gold). There was a shower of gold among those who founded it. This is called *Yañ-Caṅgum* (*Yañ* = North). Then Śrī *Caṅgum Nārāyaṇa* was founded by those longing for offspring. This is *Wañ-Caṅgum* (*Wañ* = East). These four are called *Caṅgum*.

The *Gopālarāja-vamśāvalī* folio 30b: lines 1-3

The chronicler gropes for a culturally convincing explanation for the hillock-name, but clearly fails to do so. In Mānadeva I's Cāngu Inscription, dated Śaka 386/A.D. 464, the hillock is called *dolādri* (Skt. *dola* = a swing, hammock; *adri* = hillock, a swinging hillock, a hillock which looks like a hammock, or an unstable hillock). Vajrācārya (1973:19) has offered a convincing interpretation of the Newari name for the hillock where he wrote, "In Newari the name *cāngum* means a hillock which looks like a swing." Here again Regmi writes a gloss of the word in which the second sentence contradicts the first one:

How the name *Chāngu* came to be applied is not known. It is obviously a translation of *Dolādri*, on which Nārāyaṇa takes his abode. The *Dolā*, i.e., swinging is an act of Viṣṇu in the rainy season for a seasonal frolic.

(Regmi, 1983:3)

However, later on in the same book, Regmi hastens to make a confessional remark. The last sentence, in particular, reminds us of *Nepāla Māhātmya* (II:3)

The present name Cāngu is still obscure in meaning and all that we have said is just a guess work. I have found that my view agrees with that of Dhanavajra in interpreting the meaning of *Chāngu*. One meaning offered is that there was a forest of *Champaka* trees which the Newaris call *Chaṅsiñ* (sic).

(Regmi, 1983, Addendum)

III

A less colourful transformation of the tribal hillock names is exemplified by a classic in modern scientific cartography. In the most reliable maps of the Nepal Valley, all hillock-names have been "Nepalized"-- annexed to Nepali forms, so that all Tibeto-Burman *co*-s (hillock) have been conveniently converted into somewhat absurd Indo-Aryan *cok* (Skt. *catuṣka* = a square, a courtyard) See Appendix B. A hillock known as *theñco* in A.D. 506-633 (TB *theñ* = lower *co* = peak) has been converted into *Thānkot* (*thān* = a place, after Skt. *sthāna*) *koṭ* = guardroom, a police station, a military courtyard) after the rise of the Gorkhali military power in the 18th-19th century. Compared with such prosaic transformations of toponyms, the reincarnation of *sā-mha-gum* as *svayambhū* or as *padmācala* (lotus-hill) is nothing if not a metaphysical conceit.

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APPENDIX A

theñ-co	Śaka	428/AD	506	Thānkot
hārā-guṇ		430/	508	Sitāpailā
ardha-co		479	557	Pharping
Khā-rhi-co				
breṃ-guṇ-co				
mo-guṇ-co				
mim-di-co				
guṇ-vihāra		32	608	Hārigāon (Probably sā-mha-guṇ vihāra)
cho-guṇ			?	Icaṅguṇ
pa-hañ-co				
nhā-guṇ		55	631	Balambū
pā-guṇ	M.S.	62	641	Sunākoṭhī
khā-re-vāl-gañ-co		103	679	Pātan
go-mi-bhū-dhañ-co				
ḍaṇ-ḍaṇ-guṇ		129	705	Balambū

APPENDIX B

The "Nepalized Names" of the Hillocks

Dahacok
 Jānācok
 Khālcok
 Dālcincok
 Ghumarcok
 Halcok
 Kiwācok
 Nalcincok
 Pākhācok
 Pulcok
 Sāṅgācok
 Tālcincok
 Tancok
 Tālcincok

Source: *The Kathmandu Valley Maps*. Munich: Association for Alpine Research.

APPENDIX C

Sanskritisation of the Place-names of the Valley

Lalitapattana	Yala	Bhaktapur	Khopa
Kāṣṭhamandapa	Ña	Padmakāṣṭhapurī	Kīrtipur (Guṇde)
Champapurī	Wā-de	Śivapurī	Bulhu
Svarṇachātrapurī	Lubhu	Amarāpurī	Buṅga
Śikharāpurī	Phārpīng	Ḍundupattana	Theco
Śaṅkharapurī	Pāṅgā	Vatapurī	Lohākokhā
Vanagiri	Pūco	Satapurī	Satūṅgal
Hastināpurī	Kisipiri	Bhādrapurī	Syābajigā
Candrajyoti	Sāṅkhu	Gosringapurī	Sāṅgā
Matsyanārāyanapurī	Naukvātha	Jitpurī	Khonā
Jyesthapurī/ Harisiddhi	Jalha	Hārigaon	Narha
Devapattān	Gola	Suprabhāpurī	Thakvā
Bandepurī	Bhonta	Puṇyavatī	Palanti/Panti
Vandanapurī	Badegā	Ratnapurī	Lele/Lembati
Hanumatpurī	Pula	Dolāgiri	Caṅgu
Narendrapurī	Okhata	Śaṅkharāpurī	Saṅko
Pāṇḍupurī	Pamḍu	Chandanagiri	Cilañco
Jayapur	Nakadesa	Dharmapur	Bode
Madhyapur	Thimi	Varunapur	Katuñje

Source: *Himavatkhanda* (Varanasi: Yogapracārīnī, V.S. 2013) Appendix: Old Names, p. 151.

DRY-LACQUER OR CLAY? PRELIMINARY NOTES ON A NEGLECTED NEPALESE SCULPTURAL MEDIUM

Mary Shepherd Slusser

In the early 1960s the Cleveland Museum of Art acquired a Nepalese sculpture of an unusual type, composed neither of the familiar bronze, stone, or wood characterizing other sculptures in the collection. In 1964 when under the patronage of King Mahendra Bir Bikram Shah, Stella Kramrisch organized the first exhibition of Nepalese art in the United States, at Asia House, New York, this sculpture, Vajravārāhī, the Adamantine Sow, was included (Fig. 1). In the catalog accompanying the exhibition, Professor Kramrisch identified the sculptural medium as "dry-lacquer," an identification that clings to it yet.¹

I first saw the Vajravārāhī in the early 1970s following several years' residence and study in the Kathmandu Valley. From what I could observe in the gallery setting I was convinced that the image did not belong to the dry-lacquer sculpture tradition of East Asia but rather to an altogether different tradition of modeled clay sculpture. This conviction was bolstered by recent encounters with several modeled clay images *in situ* in the Kathmandu Valley. None, to be sure, were esoteric images comparable to the Cleveland Vajravārāhī, which must have come from some *vihāra's* secret tantric shrine (*āga*)—where it "should not be seen except by two eyes, not even by three,"²—but were buddhas and bodhisattvas in visually accessible shrines such as Buddha-bari and Musun-bahal, Kathmandu (Fig. 2).³

Ostensibly as the sole example of this type of sculpture outside of Nepal, and employed for an aesthetically undistinguished image, the Cleveland Vajravārāhī elicited no particular scholarly interest over the years, either from a stylistic or technical viewpoint. My own interest in it was rekindled when during the 1980s and '90s other images of the same type began to appear in public and private art collections in the United States, at length numbering some half-dozen. With such a sizable body of material relatively close at hand it seemed time to initiate an in-depth study of these so-called "dry-lacquer" Nepalese sculptures. In 1992 the award of a fellowship by the

Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C., provided the means for conducting it in collaboration with the technological laboratory of the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery and Freer Gallery of Art, companion museums of Asian art under the Smithsonian aegis.⁴ Although the study is far from finished it seems advisable to share some of the preliminary findings by means of this short paper I write in memory of one of Nepal's greatest scholars, the late and much-lamented Dhanavajra Vajracharya.

Dry-lacquer Sculpture Defined

It will be useful to preface the description of the so-called "dry-lacquer" Nepalese sculptures with one of true dry-lacquer as practiced in East Asia. Although the term "lacquer," the fundamental ingredient of such sculptures, derives from *lac* (and ultimately Sanskrit *lākṣa*), the sticky exudate of an insect, the lacquer used in East Asia has nothing to do with *lac* but is the refined sap of a species of sumac tree (*Rhus verniciflua*), native to China and possibly Japan. In order to use it in the manufacture of lacquerware and sculpture, the liquid lacquer must be made to set, a demanding process requiring both warm temperature and high humidity. Therefore lacquer must be applied very sparingly not to deprive underlying parts from the action of these essentials to polymerization. Since thick coats will not set, thickness has to be achieved another way. In the manufacture of lacquerware it is done by applying layer upon layer of thin coats—even as many as a hundred—each thoroughly dried before the next is added. In the creation of sculptures, thickness is obtained by building up several layers of lacquer-saturated cloth. Once set, lacquer has a lustrous, glossy finish and is extremely durable, impervious to water and alcohol, almost all acids and alkalis, and to heat, insects, and decay. For example, lacquer objects recovered from Chinese tombs of the Warring States period (475—221 B.C.) are said to be "fresh enough to have been made yesterday."⁵

The term "dry-lacquer" is unrelated to the setting or drying process of liquid lacquer but is the ill-conceived Western term for a type of East Asian sculpture known in China as *tuodai* (removed core) or *jiaozhu* (wrapped hemp) and in Japan as *kanshitsu*. The definition of what constitutes dry-lacquer is inconsistent in the literature but is best used to mean the process of combining cloth with lacquer as a sculptural medium. The technique of dry-lacquer sculpture originated in China and has been practiced continuously from at least the fourth century A.D. to the present.⁶ Later transmitted to Japan, lacquer sculptures have been made there since the early eighth century A.D.⁷ Such sculptures are of two types: hollow dry-lacquer and wood-core dry-lacquer.

A finished hollow dry-lacquer sculpture may vary in appearance according to the time and place of its manufacture, its type and purpose, and the abilities and idiosyncracies of the sculptor. But by whom and whenever or wherever made, a hollow dry-lacquer sculpture is achieved through the same basic steps, complex, time-consuming, and evolved through centuries of transmitted skills. First a temporary support for the limp, lacquer-soaked cloth is made, either a wooden scaffold or a model of the intended figure in unbaked clay. The latter is strengthened with various fillers such as straw or rice chaff and sometimes with an internal wooden framework. Various fabrics are employed but coarsely woven hemp is favored for its ability to absorb the lacquer. As in the fabrication of lacquerware, each layer of lacquer-soaked cloth must dry thoroughly before the next is applied, although for sculptures there are rarely more than six or seven. Some features such as ears or hands may be carved from wood and later fastened to the image or they may be modeled in clay around wire armatures which are sometimes fiber wrapped for greater adhesion. Heads—and even arms—may also be fashioned separately and often the eyes (and in Buddha images, the *ūrṇa*) are inset with quartz or other hard materials. Thin sheets of native paper are sometimes used as the initial layer over a clay model but the purpose is unknown. Over the final layer of lacquer-impregnated cloth, details of clothing and ornament are modeled in a lacquer-based paste, a composition of pure lacquer and diverse additives such as ash of various substances, powdered brick, tile, calcined shell, and even pig's blood or gall. Finally, the clay support is dug or washed out (or if a scaffolding was used, removed) and the completed image may be gilded and painted. In some sculptures a layer of thin paper precedes the gilding and painting. Excepting the few solid parts and occasional wooden reinforcements (in the arms, for example), typically only a hollow, lightweight shell of lacquer and cloth remains. In Japan sculptors sometimes retained the wooden armature of the clay model or introduced one after the original had been removed (Fig. 3).

Wood-core dry-lacquer sculptures differ from hollow ones in that the model around which the lacquer-saturated cloth is shaped is permanent. The core may be a thin wooden shell with or without internal bracing, be formed from a number of joined wood blocks, or be a finished wood sculpture sometimes partially hollowed to reduce weight and cracking. Like the temporary cores of hollow images, whichever type of permanent core is used it is covered with one or more layers of lacquer-impregnated cloth and finished with lacquer paste, gilding and polychrome paint.

There are many extant Chinese and Japanese examples of both hollow and wood-core dry-lacquer sculptures in the temples and museums of their country of origin and in foreign collections, private and public. The Freer

Gallery of Art, for example, possesses a number of them among which are an over life-size, hollow dry-lacquer representation of the Buddha fashioned in China during the Sui period (A.D. 581—618) and a wood-core dry-lacquer bodhisattva made about the twelfth century in Japan (Figs 4-5).

The art of dry-lacquer sculpture appears to be a monopoly of China and Japan where the sap of indigenous lacquer-producing trees has been exploited since the Neolithic period. Such sculptures were once familiar in parts of Central Asia, as is known from the memoirs of the seventh-century Chinese pilgrim, Xuanzang (Hsüan-tsang), who saw a monumental dry-lacquer Buddha in Khotan, reputed to have come from Kucha, another oasis on the Silk Road.⁸ That it was of local manufacture, however, is manifestly impossible given both the absence of lacquer-producing trees that far west and the dry and dusty Silk Road. Such conditions are especially inimical to the lacquer process which requires humidity and a dust-free atmosphere. The Buddha can only have been imported from centers of dry-lacquer production farther east. Similarly, a few dry-lacquer sculptures of Chinese manufacture may have made their way to Tibet but none would have been made there (Fig. 6). India also lacks such a tradition, the closest approximation being the hollow clay- and paint-covered leather images said to have been made in antiquity and perhaps used in the theatre.⁹ As in India, lacquer also is alien to Nepal. Indeed, a fifteenth- or early sixteenth-century Chinese lacquer box from Gujarat, now in the collection of the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, may represent the oldest example of East Asian lacquer to appear on the sub-continent.¹⁰

Technical Aspects of the Nepalese Sculptures

If not dry-lacquer, what then is the nature of these heretofore enigmatic Nepalese sculptures? The answer to this question—unbaked clay modeled around an armature—was provided by examination and analysis of five sculptures in public and private collections in the United States.¹¹ Two are in museums, Cleveland and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art in California, and three in private collections. Two of the latter represent the historical Buddha, the remaining three, the Buddhist goddess, Vajravārahī (Figs 1, 7-12). In all instances, permission was granted to examine the images and to take various samples from them for technical study. (Such samples are minute, hardly the size of a pencil point, and are not injurious to the sculpture.)

The purpose of the technical study was to go beyond what the unaided eye could see, to determine how the images were constructed, of what materials, and, particularly, to ascertain the presence or absence of lacquer, the primary ingredient of dry-lacquer sculptures. Diverse methods were used including

X-ray diffraction analysis of samples of pigments and clay materials, microscopic examination of samples of fibers, clay, and binders and, for the analysis of organic materials, infrared spectrometry and gas chromatography in combination with mass spectrometry. Three of the sculptures, two public and one private, were examined in a controlled laboratory setting where as an additional investigative tool X-radiography could be used. The same three and one other sculpture were also radiocarbon dated. For comparison and control, a number of East Asian dry-lacquer sculptures and some Asian ones of unbaked clay were also examined.

The results of these tests demonstrate unequivocally that the so-called Nepalese "dry-lacquer" sculptures do not belong to that sculptural tradition but are modeled from unbaked clay. Individual differences aside, the five study sculptures are essentially uniform in the method of construction and the range of materials used. Construction begins with an armature of wood—identified as *Shorea robusta*, the familiar *sal* of the Nepalese Tarai—iron, or a combination of the two. Attached to the armature are heavy iron rods with loop ends which protrude from the back of the finished image and serve to secure and stabilize it against the shrine wall. In the body and limbs the armature can be quite substantial but is reduced to thin rods or wire for extended appendages—ears, fingers, and toes—and for semi-detached ornament such as the bone apron and fearful wreath Vajravārāhī wears (Figs 1, 9-10). Parts of the armature are frequently wrapped with cord or loosely twisted fibers to provide better adhesion for the material modeled around it (Figs 9-10). Comprising the essential mass of the sculpture, this is a thick layer composed of a matrix of unbaked clay mixed with sand particles (quartz, composite quartz, feldspar, hematite, and possibly other iron oxides), and various fibrous materials. Fibers consist of a wide array of substances including the woody parts of plants (straw, rice chaff, and similar materials), paper and cloth fibers, and whole fragments of cloth. Small lumps of resin observed in several samples indicate the presence of a binding material. Though yet to be positively identified, this binder is not lacquer since it dissolves in acetone. Ongoing tests suggest it may be *sal* resin, the well-known *sāldhūp* (Newari, *silāy*), in common use by Nepalese bronze casters as a wax binder. This mass—clay, sand, fibers, and binder—is not well consolidated but in some images is secured with a wrap of coarse cloth identified as hemp. With or without cloth, this thick layer is followed by a relatively thin one of similar fibrous material, of finer consistency and very hard and smooth (Fig. 10). It is the base for a thin layer of clay or gesso-like material which provides an undercoat for the final polychrome painting. Coarse cloth, plastered on both sides with a wash of fine clay, is used to fashion semi-detached parts of clothing such as the monastic robes

worn by the Buddha images (Fig. 12). The bone ornament apron worn by the Cleveland Vajravārāhī is supported by a piece of woven matting (*sukul*). On some sculptures, irregular fragments of thin Nepalese paper (and in one instance, thin cotton fabric) were found on parts of the surface. They most likely represent restoration methods since some overlie previously painted surfaces. Although paint samples were analyzed and their properties identified the results are not judged especially useful to the study since all of the images have undergone frequent repainting, both within their shrines and afterward.

Samples of clay, cloth, and plant material were taken from four of the images for purposes of radiocarbon (C-14) dating. To judge by the results, the oldest of the tested images may be the Cleveland Vajravārāhī whose calibrated age range was A.D. 1040 to 1310. If in fact this image was made sometime between these two dates, the sculpture predates the museum's sixteenth- or seventeenth-century estimated age by many years. The Los Angeles sculpture also appears to be earlier than the fifteenth-century date assigned to it by the museum. Radiocarbon testing provides a calibrated age range of A.D. 1250 to 1420 for it, dates which also roughly correspond to those obtained from the other tested images. These matters—dates of the images and the validity of radiocarbon dating—will be fully explored in a final report.¹²

There are certain similarities between the technique of dry-lacquer sculpture as practiced in East Asia and unbaked clay sculpture in Nepal. Among them is the use of cloth and paper as construction materials, and of fiber wraps for armatures. Unbaked clay is also used by both, but of occasional and temporary service in the one, fundamental and permanent in the other. Also shared is the practice of inseting eyes with hard substances. Favored by dry-lacquer sculptors, the custom seems less common in Nepal. Of the five study sculptures only one had such eyes (Fig. 11).

Despite these similarities, the two traditions, lacquer and unbaked clay sculpture, are fundamentally different. Lacquer images were created as free-standing, self-supporting images that could be made in one place and installed in another, were lightweight—even wood-core images are usually partially hollowed—and above all were durable. Except for some losses, such as the hands and surface finish, lacquer images like the Freer Gallery's sixth-seventh century Buddha have endured practically unscathed for well over a millenium (Fig. 4). By contrast, the Nepalese images are extremely heavy, very fragile, and designed as permanent installations. Although none of the five now displaced images used in this study is very large, ranging between 63.5 to 132 centimeters high (25-52 inches), they are remarkably heavy for their size. For reasons both practical and religious, all were

probably modeled *in situ* within the confines of the shrines in which they were meant to be worshiped — and in the case of esoteric images, secretly. Once constructed and secured to the wall by iron rods attached to the armature, the sculpture was meant to stay. The fact that none of these five were so destined is evident in the lamentable condition in which most of them are now, or were before restoration (Figs. 7-12). In the case of the three images of Vajravārāhī, thieves must have unceremoniously ripped them from their traditional support, a prostrate cadaver, which, freed of the dancing goddess, undoubtedly still lie crumbling in some Nepali shrine (Fig. 13). Even when still enshrined, these friable images were subject to the destructive attention of rats, attracted to the clay, and insects to the edible fibers mixed in it. It is the rats, so the temple guardians affirm, that necessitate the frequent refurbishing of Bagh Bhairava, the clay tiger image enshrined in Kirtipur. The fragility of images made of unbaked clay even when otherwise undisturbed is also apparent by the number of repairs and restorations effected on them over the years and long antedating their removal from Nepal.

The Cultural Significance of Unbaked Clay Sculptures

The identification of these Nepalese sculptures as unbaked clay rather than dry-lacquer has far reaching implications for the history of Asian art in general and for Nepalese culture in particular. As for the former, it is clear that the antecedents of the Nepalese sculptures are not to be sought in the dry-lacquer tradition of China but in the unbaked clay tradition of the Himalayas and Central and East Asia, relationships it would be premature to discuss in these preliminary notes.

The cultural ramifications of these images with respect to the role clay plays in Nepalese culture is enormous. Clay, both baked (*terra-cotta*) and unbaked has served artistic and religious purposes in Nepal for millennia. Numerous clay seals and figurines from the Licchavi and Gupta period have come to light over the years¹³ and there is the remarkable testimony of an inscribed image of Umā-Maheśvara at the Siku-bahi locale in Patan. Dated in accordance with A.D. 573, the inscription refers to a set of clay Mātkas that "in the course of time...had greatly deteriorated" necessitating their replacement in stone.¹⁴ Whether they corresponded in any way to the technique described in this paper cannot be known but the inscription substantiates the presence of at least some kind of clay sculptural tradition in Nepal at least by the sixth century A. D.

In most cultures clay is clay or at best only a few varieties are denominated with any special modifiers. In Nepal, however, the types of clay, each with a different name, are legion. The illustrated dictionary of

architectural terms compiled by Gutschow and others lists no fewer than eighteen types of clay, each with a distinctive name according to its perceived use.¹⁵ To the Nepalese these individual peculiarities of clay are not confined to their physical properties but to their religious—even magical—ones as well. For the annual rituals associated with the *abhiṣeka* and refurbishing of important deities clays of several different types have to be sought at prescribed places. In the case of Rato Macchendranath, whose image may itself be of clay,¹⁶ eleven different varieties are said to be used, one of them from the environs of the prestigious goddess Mhaipi-ajimā. From here also, legend affirms, came the material for the construction of Svayambhu stupa.¹⁷ In Licchavi and Gupta times, too, special clays had to be sought from special places for special occasions. In a royal edict of A.D. 598, for example, the hapless citizens of Kurppāsi village (now Khopasi) were instructed to furnish fifty varieties of white clay for festivals connected with a palace or temple in the distant Kathmandu Valley.¹⁸

A continuing aspect of research respecting Nepalese clay sculptures is to learn why, beyond its obvious economic value, clay should be imbued with such significance in Nepal and particularly why with all its inherent weaknesses as a sculptural medium, it is so employed? Traditionally, in Indian culture the use of clay for representing the gods was scorned. The *Agni-purāṇa* in listing the hierarchy of materials to be used in fashioning sacred images affirms that the one garnering the least merit for the donor is clay.¹⁹ Even wood ranks higher. Yet in Nepal, according to Vajrayāna practice, at least, the hierarchy is reversed with clay outranking all other media as the preferred one for representing the gods. According to the oral testimony of priests and temple guardians, the most powerful images are made of it. Why this should be so is yet to be documented. Perhaps the value of clay is linked to the notion that from it come all basic human resources—food and the materials to build houses, temples, and even representations of the gods. The constant renewal necessitated by these physically fragile, if ritually powerful, images may relate in some broad way to regeneration as implied by annual *abhiṣeka* rituals. It also perhaps parallels the cycle of destruction and renewal of ritually powerful dance masks, a tradition that apparently shares in common with the clay sculptural tradition both certain techniques and the same ritually sanctioned practitioners.

Like other questions related to the cultural significance of the unbaked clay sculptural tradition, these speculations await further study. I will be searching for answers in future field work in Nepal. Meanwhile, I invite correspondence from readers who may already have these answers. In any event, it is to be hoped that Nepalese scholars whose interest may be

aroused by reading these preliminary notes will be conducting their own studies. These will surely plumb depths a foreign researcher is unlikely to reach alone.



Figure 1. This image of Vajravārāhī was the first Nepalese sculpture to be labeled "dry-lacquer" and according to recent radiocarbon dating may be much earlier than the 16th-17th century date now assigned to it. The Cleveland Museum of Art, Andrew R. and Martha Holden Jennings Fund (acc. no. 64.103). Photograph courtesy of the Cleveland Museum of Art.

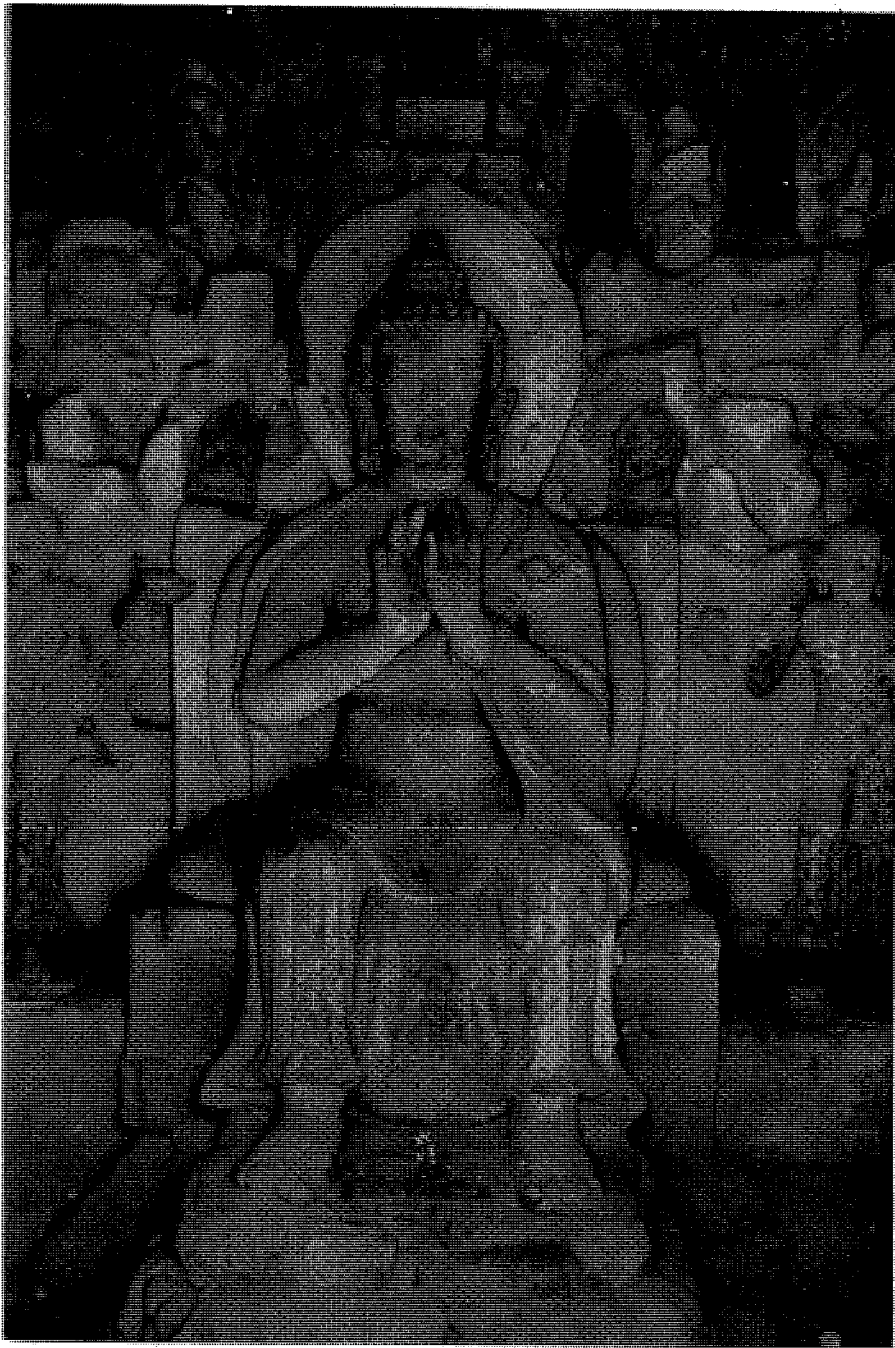


Figure 2. Maitreya, enthroned in the Tuṣita heaven, Musun-bahal, Kathmandu. Restored A.D. 1640. Unbaked clay modeled in situ, some polychromy. H: c. 183 cm. Photograph c. 1966.



Figure 3. A hollow dry-lacquer image of the disciple Sāriputra installed in 734 A.D. in the temple of Kōfuku, Nara, Japan, with diagram of the internal bracing system. H: 154.8 cm. After Samuel C. Morse, "Japanese sculpture in Transition: An Eighth-century Example from the Tōdai-ji Buddhist Sculpture Workshop," *The Art Institute of Chicago Museum Studies*, vol. 13, no. 1 (1987), Figs. 7-8.



Figure 4. Historical Buddha, probably made about the end of the fifth or beginning of the sixth century A.D., China. Hollow dry-lacquer, traces of gilding and polychromy, some wire and wood armature, eyeballs inset glass. H: 99.5 cm. Freer Gallery of Art (acc. no. 44.46). Photograph courtesy of the Freer Gallery of Art.



Figure 5. Detail of an unidentified bodhisattva, Japan, c. 12th century A.D. Wood-core dry-lacquer, gildin and polychrome pint. Freer Gallery of Art (acc. no. 71.6). Photograph courtesy of the Freer Gallery of Art.



Figure 6. Portrait of an unidentified Gelugpa lama, China, Qing dynasty (1644-1911), seventeenth-eighteenth century. Hollow dry-lacquer with gold leaf and pigments. H: 54.5 cm. Collection of The Newark Museum (acc. no. 78124). Gift of Redfield Beckwith 1978. Photograph courtesy of The Newark Museum.

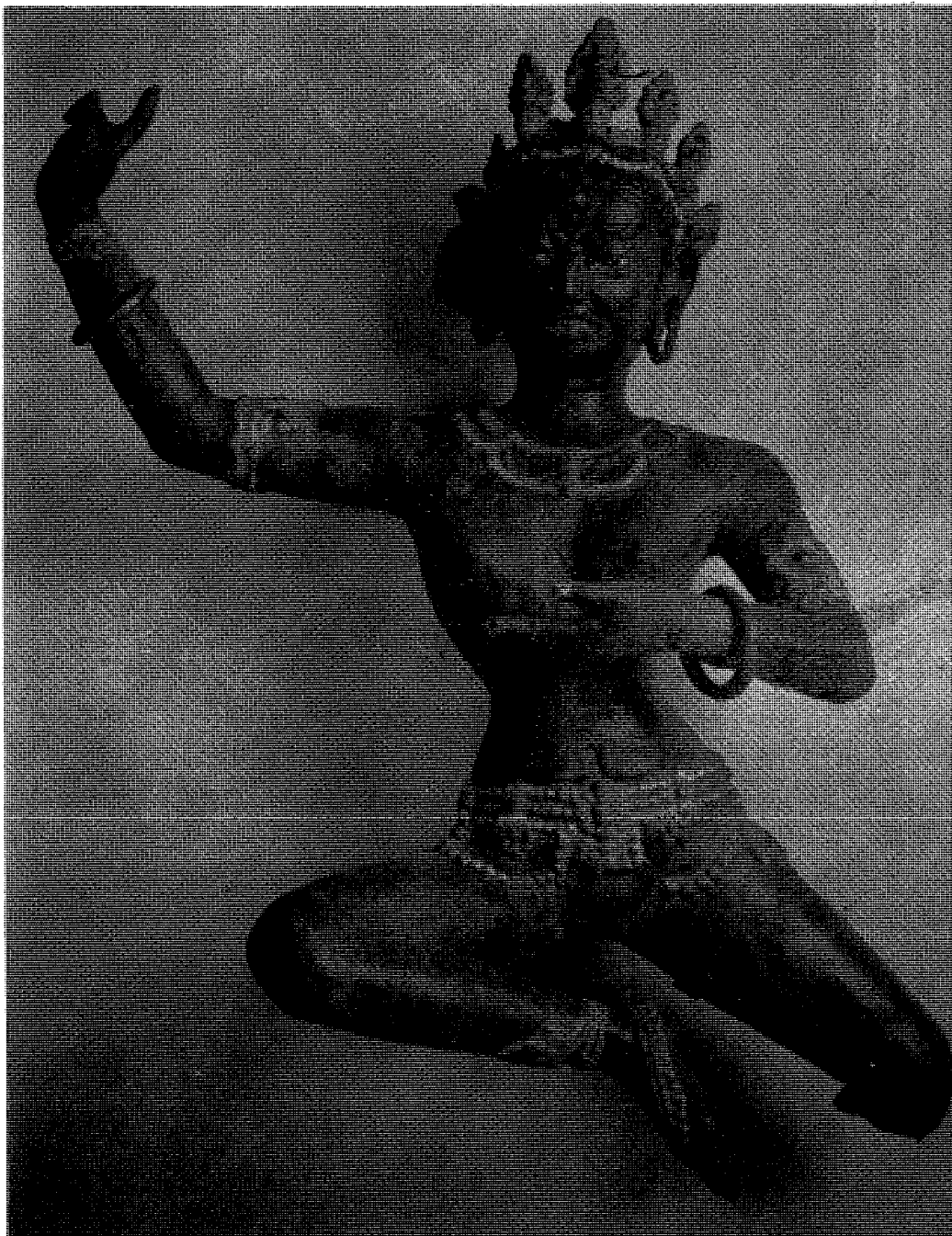


Figure 7. Extremely fragile, this image of the goddess Vajraārāhī has lost its cadaver support, part of one leg, and most of the sow-head projecting from her head. Unbaked clay, polychrome paint, iron armature, two copper bracelets. H: 76.2 cm. Los Angeles County Museum of Art (acc. no. M. 90.195). Photograph courtesy of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art.

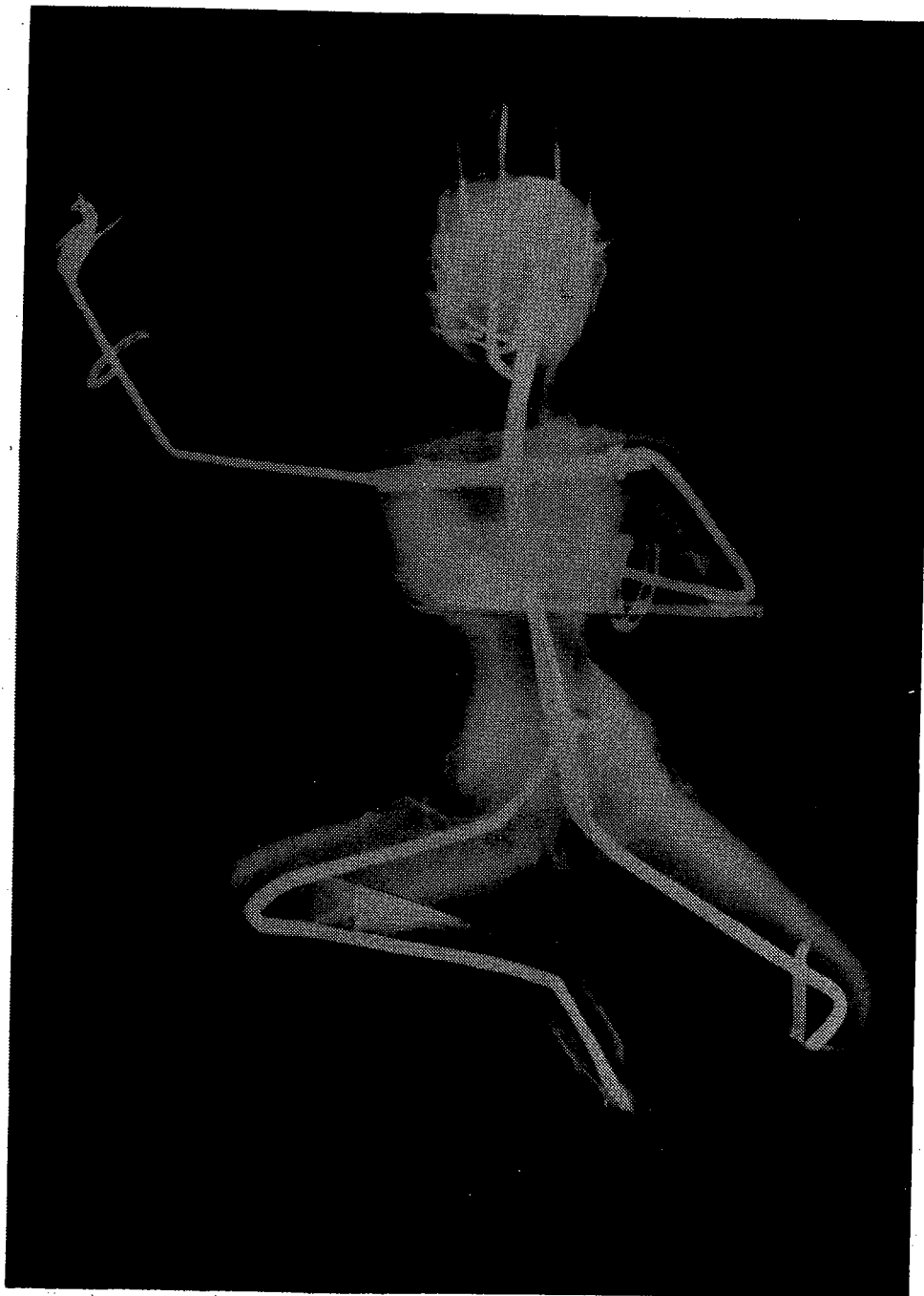


Figure 8. X-radiograph of the Los Angeles image (Figure 7) revealing the massive iron armature and thin wires around which the image was constructed and the vertical copper tubes used in the crown.



Figure 9. Another representation of Vajravārāhī showing damaged condition in which it appeared on the art market. Unbaked clay, polychrome paint, iron and wire armature. H: 101.5 cm. The John and Berthe Ford Collection, Baltimore, Maryland.



Figure 10. The semi-detached wire armature for the macabre ornaments of the goddess's wreath is tightly bound with cord to improve adhesion. The exposed armature above the knee retains only a little of the cord wrap and none of the modeled ornament. The thin, hard clay shell which forms the outer layer of unbaked clay images may be observed on the damaged elbow. Detail of Figure 9.



Figure 11. As an unusual feature among known Nepalese unbaked clay sculptures, the eyes of this image, composed of glass and an unidentified nacreous substance, are inset. Detail of Figure 9.



Figure 12. This once splendid image of the historical Buddha illustrates the ravages caused by removal of unbaked sculptures from the shrines in which they were modeled. Note both the torn, clay-stiffened cloth which provided the semi-detached parts of the garment, and the exposed armature in the fingers of the right hand. H: 81.5 cm. Private collection.



Figure 13. All of the unbaked clay images of Vajravārāhī probably were originally supported on a cadaver such as this Nepalese exemplar in carved wood, ca. 15th century. H: 109 cm. Collection of Constance B. and Carroll L. Cartwright, New York, New York. Photograph by O. E. Nelson, courtesy of Mr. and Mrs. Cartwright.

Notes

- 1 Stella Kramrisch, *The Art of Nepal* (New York: Asia Society, 1964), p. 139, Pl. 53. While in recent years the gallery label has been modified, museum records accompanying photographs of the image still identify the medium as dry lacquer.
- 2 Bernhard Kölver and Hemraj-Sakya, *Documents from the Rudravarna-Mahāvihāra, Pātan. 1. Sales and Mortgages* (Sankt Augustin: VGH Wissenschaftsverlag, 1985), p. 16.
- 3 The Budha-bari image is illustrated in Mary Shepherd Slusser, *Nepal Mandala: A Cultural Study of the Kathmandu Valley* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), vol. 2, Pl. 481.
- 4 My principal collaborator has been Paul Jett, a conservator without whose assistance and patience, which I gratefully acknowledge, this study could not have been conducted.
- 5 F. Bailey Vanderhof, *Oriental Lacquer*. Exhibition catalog of the Santa Barbara Museum of Art (Santa Barbara, CA, 1976), p. 6.
- 6 Literary references confirm the existence of hollow dry-lacquer sculptures at least as early as the fourth century A.D. but no extant sculptures predate the sixth century (Alexander Soper, *Literary Evidence for Early Buddhist Art in China* (Ascona: *Artibus Asiae*, Supplement 19, 1959), pp. 19-20.
- 7 For the history of lacquer and lacquer sculptures in East Asia and a more detailed description of lacquer sculpture technique, see M. S. Slusser, "The Art of East Asian Lacquer Sculpture," *Oriental Art*, in press.
- 8 Paul Pelliot, "Les Statues en Laque Séche dans l'ancien art chinois," *Journal Asiatique* (April-June 1923), pp. 184-86.
- 9 Stella Kramrisch, *The Viṣṇudharmottaram* (Calcutta: Calcutta University Press, 1924), p. 18, n. 2. It is unclear whether the reference is actually to sculptures or perhaps only refers to painted leather puppets such as are made today.
- 10 James C. Y. Watt and Barbara B. Ford, *East Asian Lacquer: The Florence and Herbert Irving Collection* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1991), p. 10, Fig. 2.
- 11 Most likely there are others in Europe and Asia but if so they have not come to my attention.
- 12 Some of the problems respecting radiocarbon dating of lacquer images are discussed in Slusser, "The Art of East Asian Lacquer Sculpture" (in press).
- 13 Some of the figurines are illustrated in Pratapaditya Pal, *Art of Nepal* (Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 1985), Figs S2-S4 and a seal in M. S. Slusser, "Bodhgaya and Nepal," in *Bodhgaya, Site of Enlightenment*, ed. J. Leoshko (Bombay: Marg Publications, 1988), Fig. 18. An inscribed Licchavi-period seal from Jumla, Western Nepal, is cataloged by Dhanavajra Vajracarya, *Licchavikālakā abhilekha* (Licchavi Period Inscriptions). Institute of Nepal and Asian Studies, Historical Collections Series, no. 6 (Kathmandu: Institute of Nepal and Asian Studies, 1973), inscr. 189.^w

- 14 D. Vajracarya, *Licchavikālakā abhilekha*, inscr. 53, pp. 211-13. In a previous work (*Nepal Mandala*, vol. 1, p. 234) I erroneously referred to the dilapidated images as "terra-cotta" but I now observe that the Sanskrit word is *mṛmāya* (made of earth or clay, earthen), rendered the same way (*māto*) in the Nepali translation by Vajracharya.
- 15 Niels Gutschow, B. Kölver, and I. Shresthacarya, *Newar Towns and Buildings: An Illustrated Dictionary, Newari-English* (Sankt Augustin: VGH Wissenschaftsverlag, 1987), p. 185. On the following page, names are also provided for the various additives mixed with these clays, many of which are those used in the clays serving as a sculptural medium.
- 16 The composition of this famous image is discussed in Slusser, *Nepal Mandala*, vol. 1, pp. 377-378.
- 17 Daniel Wright, ed., *History of Nepal* 3rd ed. (Calcutta: Ranjan Gupta, 1966), pp. 99-100.
- 18 D. Vajracharya, *Licchavikālakā abhileka*, inscr. 68. Whether the clay was for Kailāsakūṭa, or as Vajracharya believes, Paśupatinātha, is discussed by Slusser, *Nepal Mandala*, vol. 1, p. 108, n. 134.
- 19 Ulrich von Schroeder, *Indo-Tibetan Bronzes* (Hong Kong: Visual Dharma, 1981), p. 54.

DONATIONS CALLED DEPOSITS, OR, THE MALLA STATES AND PRIVATE RITUALS (DOCUMENTS FROM NEPAL. 7.)

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1. Side by side with the familiar form of copper-plate grants, the Mediaeval Nepalese kingdoms ruled by the Mallas knew and used a more modest style for donations. These were written on the narrow oblong palm-leaf strips familiar from other everyday transactions, such as land sales, partitions, wills etc. Such donations often were more restricted in scope than their copper-plate counterparts, the limitations extending in several directions. First, there is the volume of the donation: it is often parts only of a field, or modest sums of money, which are being willed away. Second, the donors usually are commoners, with lower castes being well represented. Third, among occasions one does find the familiar, generalized donations for the benefit of a deity or cult; but often the purpose is more specific and stems from the vicissitudes of human life: smallish rituals established in the name of a deceased relative form no inconsiderable part among them.

The mode of these donations shows the peculiarity indicated by the title of this paper: they usually go by the name of 'deposit', *nikṣepa-*, which is not easily reconciled with the notion of a 'gift', *dāna-*. [In view of this, I should say I am at present using the word 'donation' as an abbreviated description of their contents as expressed in Western parlance, and not as an attempt to render a notion derived from Sanskrit (or Newārī).] And finally, those among them which record gifts of land share a formal property highly unusual in land records: they lack the seal which invariably accompanied other transactions where land passed from one hand into another's.

In order to assess the import of this anomaly, it is necessary to revert to their function.

2. SEALS. As shown on an earlier occasion, documents recording sales of houses or fields invariably show a clay impression of a seal. This bears a king's name and emblem(s) when as a vendor he is directly involved; in

transactions between private individuals, the impressions usually either show the syllable *śrī* or some emblem, often a standard one: a hexagon, a *caitya*, a *kalaśa*, or the like.

Their function is tolerably clear. For the seal is invariably affixed to the left part of the document, which consists of a tight scroll twice pierced, then tied by a thread knotted on top, the knot being as it were hidden beneath the lump of clay which was to bear the impression of the seal. From damaged or torn documents we know this hidden part of the document usually contained an *abstract of the proceedings* more fully recorded in the body of the document itself - which points to its first and obvious purpose: in cases of litigation involving a suspicion of forgery, it was this abstract which could be consulted: its integrity was easily verified by the state of the seal.

This implies it must have been some official agency which was responsible for affixing the clay or sealing the abstract. Its nature is again easy to guess at: it will have been some form of a cadastral office that kept records of owners of lands so as to facilitate the collection of taxes, possibly on the lines suggested in Kaut. 2.35.

3. The donations written on palm leaf (some 70 in number which have been photographed during the last years) bear no traces of such sealing. There can be no doubt they are not cases of seals being lost: there are no punctures on their left sides, and the margin is often sufficiently wide for us to be certain the left part was not cut off; more important, the absence of seals is a recurrent feature of this type of document, not a single exception being found among the corpus.

If one was to interpret this fact by the criteria just used one would have to say these transfers were not entered into cadastral records. In our collections, the first specimen of this type dates from N.S.526, i.e. A.D. 1406; they continue to slightly beyond the end of the Malla era: the last one is dated N.S.906, i.e. 1786, with no more than what would seem to be accidental gaps within the series.

4. As so often, texts are written in a mixture of Sanskrit and Newāri, with the customary deviations from Standard Sanskrit. Behind the numerous variations one can recognize a fixed pattern which consists of two parts, the first of them giving the legal framework while the second contains what might be called the particulars of the case. They are divided the usual way. The first part follows a grid written in Sanskrit; the second part uses the vernacular. For both sections, one can recognize a standardized wording, occasional deviations notwithstanding. This runs as follows:

THE FORMULA

(A) Sanskrit Part

NB. For DATE and PLACE, what is reproduced here is the older and briefer style attested since the earliest specimens of the type. Early in the 17th century A.D., it came to be much embellished.

PROTOCOL [*siddham*] *śraiyo 'stu* OR [*siddham*] *svasti*

Hail. Let it be auspicious OR Hail. Welfare.

DATE *saṃvat* <...> <...>*māse* <...>*pakṣe* <...>*tithau*

The year ..., in the month of ..., in its ... half, on the ... lunar day.

PLACE < ... > *vāstavya* dwelling in ...

DONOR [*amuka*]*nāmnā *dānapatinā/*yajamānena*¹

svahastena sva vidyamānena svavācā pratipannībhūtena by the donor/sacrificer N.N., by his own hand, himself

being present, having acknowledged [the donation] by his own word,

OBJECT < ... > *gṛham* AND/OR

< ... > *kṣetram* < ... > *ropaṇikam* < ... > *dakṣiṇātaśca*
etanmadhye AND/OR

mohora ṭaṃkā [or some other currency unit] [+ sums]

the ... house / field of ... *ropaṇikas*, ... [enumeration of boundaries:] and south of ...: in their midst and/or the *mohora ṭaṃkā* (coins)

PURPOSE ... *nimittyarthaṃ*

for the sake of ...

DONEE *śrī-śrī-śrī-<...>prītikāmanayā* (with variants)

from devotion and love to the Thrice Venerable ...

MODE *nikṣepena*²

by way of a deposit

TRANSACTION *saṃpradattam bhavati*³ OR, in Newārī: *duṃ tā juro*.

Has been donated OR has been placed inside.

¹Both terms occur with Newārī inflectional endings: *dānapati-sa*, *yajamāna-sna* etc.——²Always in Newarized forms: *nikṣepana*, *nikṣepna* etc.——³

A corresponding sentence in the active voice is attested in a gilt copper plate dated N.S.788 (Abhilekha-Saṃgraha 7 (Kathmandu 2019), pp.23f.), a royal donation.

This is usually followed by the passage in Newārī (below,(B)) which records the stipulations of the particular case. It is either preceded or followed by one of the usual stanzas on Gifts of Land, the verse familiar

from countless documents

svadattam paradattam vā yo haret suraviprayoh |
śaṣṭhivarṣasahasreṇa viṣṭhāyām jāyate kṛmih ||

'Whoever takes from gods and brāhmaṇas what was given by himself or given by others, he is reborn a worm in ordure for sixty thousand years.'

With some variations being the most popular among them. Further imprecations follow; only at the end the formula returns to Sanskrit when naming the WITNESS(ES) *dattapatrārthe sākṣī dṛṣṭaḥ*, and the

The witness seen in the matter of this deed of gift...

ESCHATOCOL *śubham (± astu)*, i.e. (±Let it be) propitious.

(B) This is expanded by an account of the technicalities of the particular donation. At this point, the formula begins to use the Newārī language, usually introduced by (± *thvate*) *bhāṣā*—an expression which as it were combines two different interpretations. It is familiar from phrases like *ataḥ param deśabhāṣā* 'from now on, the language of the region' (which is also attested in the present corpus); *atha nepālabhāṣā*; *ataḥ (sic!) nepālabhāṣayā likhyate* etc. But what follows usually gives the donor's intention, and his provisions for how the donation is to be administered, in a way which makes paraphrases like 'stipulations', 'agreement' or even 'substance' a rendering more appropriate to the context.

The wording of these stipulations is not as stable as that of the Sanskrit portion; yet the following stages are rarely omitted.

(B1) *thva vuyā/dāmayā¹ [± varṣam prati] vara sñāna*

in enacting the [± annual] vow of this field/money

¹sometimes only *thvateyā*, i.e. of this (donation), connected with this donation.

(B2) This is followed by the stipulations of the individual donation which are subject to great variation. They are often laid down in considerable detail, recording the ritual, specific lists of items to be offered, the dates, etc. The section usually ends in

... *viya māla*. ... has to be given,

and sometimes adds *praśeṣa guthisyam bhakṣābhojana di juro*

The remainder is to be offered by the *guthi* for a feast.

(B3) Last, there are the imprecations and blessings: counterparts, in a sense, of the Sanskrit verse or verses:

thvate avicchinna yānana nistrapam yaṁja māla.

They have to make the terms adhered to, causing no interruption to them.

*lopa yāya mateva. lopa yākāle govrāhmaṇādi pañcamahāpātaka rāka juro.
lopa mayākāle utottra juro.*

No loss must be caused. If there is a loss, (they will) obtain the Five Great Sins¹, (killing) a cow, a brāhmaṇa etc. If there is no loss, highest (bliss).

¹i.e. the guilt or fruit of the Five Great Sins.

5. Deposits vs. Gifts (*nikṣepa-* vs. *dāna-*)

5.1. If it was not for the term *nikṣepeṣa*—which occurs in most of the donations, though not all of them—the formula looks straightforward enough: At ..., on ..., X, the donor [... usually defined by name and place of residence], has, [± by way of a deposit,] given/donated the Field (etc.) named Y [usually defined by its demarcations in the four directions of the compass] to Z, for the sake of ...

5.2. But an expression 'by way of a deposit, *nikṣepeṣa*' is difficult to accommodate within the context of a donation. Indeed, in the proper sense of the terms, the two notions are irreconcilable: a donation implies an owner relinquishing ownership; in a deposit, he retains it. The sāstra expressly ordains deposits are to be left untouched by the trustee: *yathā dāyas tathā grahaḥ*: this is how Manu (8.180; repeated in 8.195) sums up what the preceding three fourths of his verse set forth in a more explicit version (*yo yathā niksīped dhaste yam artham yasya mānavaḥ sa tathaiva grahītavyo*, in whichever form (or way) somebody deposits something into some (other person)'s hands, in that very (same form) he is to take it back: as the giving, so the taking.' And in his commentary on Manu 8.180, Medhātithi has nothing substantial to add: *yathā dāyo dīyate niksīpyate tathā grhyate*, 'the way the object given (*dāyaḥ*) is given, i.e. deposited, the same way it is taken, returned'¹. Obviously, this is a legal as well as a moral obligation: 'yo *nikṣepam yācyamāno niksīptur na prayacchati* | *sa yācyah prāḍvivākena* &c. Someone who, being requested, does not give (i.e. return) a deposit to the depositor, he is to be requested by the judge': this is Manu again (8.181). And this clearly is the general view the śāstras take.

5.3. Given by way of a deposit, *nikṣepeṣa sampradattam*: is it deposits of lands, then, rather than donations which the documents record? There are other parts of the formula which provide an unequivocal answer.

1. Towards its beginning, the Newārī section describes the transaction by the term *vara sānana* (var. *vala sānana, olasā*). *vara-* is the familiar Sanskrit term, the vow or wish as well as its result, its fulfilment. From literary

references it is quite clear such vows create a binding obligation.— *sāne* I take to be, with *Jørgensen's Dictionary*, as a variant of *sane*, which is 'to act, behave; intend'. Etymologically, then, *vara sāne* is both 'to intend a vow' and 'to enact its fulfilment'; it is the latter meaning which is applicable to the stage of the transaction when the term is employed: the context usually is *thva dāmayā* (or: *vuyā*) *vara sānana* 'enacting the vow of this money/field', which is tantamount to the proceeds of whatever is 'deposited'.²

2. Misappropriations were traditionally threatened by a whole host of imprecatory formulas. We have just quoted the stanza *svadattam paradattam vā*, 'Whoever takes from gods and brāhmaṇas..' etc., and the Newārī text, though not as stable as the Sanskrit one, usually has similar injunctions: N.S.735 *avicchini- yānana dhasyaṃ takva *jajamānapanisyam nistrapaṃ yaṃja māla* 'having definitely agreed to make it (i.e. to perform the rite) without interruption, the sacrificers have to make (the donation) adhered to' is one instance from many; with all the variations in individual documents, yet the crucial words 'uninterrupted' (*avicchinna-*) and 'have to make it adhered to' (*nistrapaṃ yaṃja māla*) rarely fail to be mentioned. Towards the end of documents, one can find standard expressions like 'for as long as the moon and the sun and the earth (will stand)', etc. Going by such phrases, there can be no question the transaction was meant to exist in perpetuity, and the owner did not contemplate to set counter to the verse at naught which enjoined him not to take back what he himself had given. (What he actually did was another matter: see below, §§6-7.)

5.4. Why, then, call a deposit what was meant as a perpetual and irreversible donation? In order to understand this, one will have to go beyond Manu's deceptively simple definition.

For deposits, the śāstra has two different terms, *upanidhi-* and *nikṣepa-*. And in Arthaśāstra terminology, the two are not synonymous.

What Manu described in the verses just quoted would in Arthaśāstra usage have been an *upanidhi-*, viz., a deposit entrusted to somebody's safe keeping, not to be used, and to be surrendered to the owner upon demand in the state and shape in which it had been handed over: this is the commentators' sealed bag, with the custodian possibly not even aware of its contents³.

The *nikṣepa-* of the Arthaśāstra often is of a different kind⁴. The case Kautalya dwells upon at some length (3.12.33 etc.) is the materials someone entrusts to an artisan to produce something: the gold being taken to a goldsmith, etc.

There is, then, an essential difference between the two. The *upanidhi*- must on no account be touched. Obviously, this cannot hold good for the materials an artisan is to work on.

In the course of time, *nikṣepa*- came to be the dominating concept, pushing the word *upanidhi*- into the background, though never quite replacing it. (The reason possibly was entirely practical in nature: adulteration, misappropriation etc. and ensuing litigation are of course more likely to arise with objects destined to be altered in the normal course of things.) But when the *nikṣepa*- as it were came to absorb the *upanidhi*-, this merger obliterated the essential distinction of whether the object entrusted was to be used or not. Predictably, the *śāstra* shows a marked tendency to say it should not—an impractical procedure since in effect it left the raw materials entrusted to artisans without a rule⁵.

But the exigencies of practical life do make themselves felt here and there. There is a rule in Nārada from which we have to infer he knew of deposits that could be used. *Lariviere* 2,5⁶ (= *Jolly* 2,8⁷), with minor deviations in wording) says

yaś cārtham sādhayet tena nikṣeptur ananujñayā |
tatrāpi daṇḍyaḥ sa bhavet tac ca sodayam āvāhet ||

'Whoever acquires a profit by it [i.e. by the deposit] without the depositor's permission⁸, he ought to be punished even there (i.e. by the king, *rājñā*, 2.4) and ought to procure [the deposit] together with the income (gained by using it, contrary to the terms of a deposit)⁹.'

ananujñayā, without permission: this implies that when permission was given, the materials deposited could be used by the trustee. Such permitted uses cover the case of the artisans' materials, and they cover the case of the documents under discussion. First and obviously, with the bequests that consisted of money only: funds which were meant to be lent out against interest¹⁰, as is evident from the *thva dāmayā vara sānana* passage (Formula, [B1]), as is evident, too, from the *guṭhi* accounts which have been preserved¹¹. The interest collected was to finance the ritual established.—With donated fields, the case was not any different in principle: they were also meant to be used, to yield an annual income by having them farmed. Nārada's term *nikṣepaḥ sodayaḥ* seems a perfectly adequate description of what the donations intend.

5.5. Even so, all this could have been easily accommodated under the more conventional heading of *dāna*-, 'gift' or 'donation'. Countless establishments were financed that way. And the formula itself has preserved three words which stem from this context: *dattapatrārthe* in the Witnessing formula, *dānapatinā ... sampradattam* 'given by the donor', clearly point back to an

origin in 'gifts': a depositor is no *dānapati*-, let alone a *yajamāna*-. To go by this, the *nikṣepa*- seems to be a layer superposed over a previous formalism which viewed the transaction in terms of gifts.

The reason for the innovation is not beyond conjecture: we shall now turn to the question of what may have lain behind the change in formalism. Conceivable answers lie in two separate trains of thought.

5.6. Conceptually, when applied to the transactions recorded, 'deposits' had indubitable advantages over 'donations'.

(1) For one thing, all donations mention a clearly defined purpose which the endowment is to serve: usually some kind of ritual, down to lamps to be lit on a particular day. Now, with gifts a donee normally is free in his dispositions as to the property made over to him: I do not know whether a donor's intention could legally bind the recipient. But such intentions were the driving force behind the endowments here recorded, and from this point of view, deposits were a serviceable solution.

To be sure, there is a definite shift in emphasis in this: in deposits, retention of ownership is of the essence; the endowments rather stress the other side of the coin, non-transfer of ownership to those endowed: they are not owners, but trustees.

(2) This leads to the second point; the question of the grantees (which we shall have to revert to). The rituals established of course address themselves to a deity who in this very central sense would have to be regarded as the beneficiary. But even so the endowments can hardly be said to form part of what this god or goddess owns: the usual priestly hierarchy which acts for the deity has no voice in handling them. Rather, it is *guṭhis* which are entrusted with this task, i.e. usually, autonomous bodies of a donor's compeers which serve a religious or social purpose.— Obviously, the members of such *guṭhis*, though recipients, were in no sense the grantees: there are constant sentences of the type (N.S.762) *ropa yāya mateva; ropa yākāre govrāhmaṇādi pañcamahāpātaka juro* etc., 'it is not permitted to cause a loss; if (they, i.e. the members of the *guṭhi*) cause a loss, there (will) be (the guilt of) the Five Great Sins, (viz., killing) a cow, a *brāhmaṇa* etc.'; there are the standardized provisions for control: every document unfailingly reminds *guṭhi* members the property is not theirs. Again, a deposit was an adequate expression of the legal position.

Such, then, are the reasons which could in theory be advanced against the *dāna*-, and in favour of the *nikṣepa*- model. But they have to be balanced against a simple fact. For centuries, deities and cults had thriven on endowments framed as gifts, *dānas*, and for all we know, the pattern had worked reasonably well; Malla kings continued to use it; distrust of the traditional

administrative handling of donations would hardly seem a sufficient cause for the innovation.

6. THE MISSING SEALS. It is at this point that one is driven back to the peculiarity mentioned above and shelved until now, viz., the missing seals that tell us the transfers of ownership were not entered into cadastral records. Obviously, this fact is closely related to the questions of deposits, in the sense of retained ownership. Essentially, it is problems of state finances that now raise their head.

Lands granted to religious institutions, it is well known, used to be exempt from taxes and other kinds of revenue; any donation of lands a private individual made to a deity would thus reduce the income of the state. Which is why kings resorted to various devices to stem this drain¹². It now seems the Malla states chose what cannot but be called a radical method in order to achieve this aim: for whole large groups of donations, they withheld this permission altogether. Owners, then, continued to be liable to pay the normal dues to the state even on lands they had willed away.

This explains a peculiarity in the terms of our donations. More often than not, it is but *a certain part* of a particular field that is being given. A field, e.g., is described the usual way, giving its name, its size, its four boundaries (either in full or by way of an abbreviation), the description concluding with *etanmadhye* 'in their midst' [i.e. located between the boundaries]: up to this point, the text exactly conforms to the pattern we know from sales. But now it is a fraction which follows: one half, one third etc. of this (is donated). This is an odd way to express the matter. If someone wishes to sell half a field, he will of course have it partitioned, and have the deed drawn up so as to indicate the boundaries of the plot he means to dispose of. Notionally, i.e. when divested of its overtones, there seems to be no objection to regarding a donation as a sale at price zero; if there is no flaw to this, there would seem to be no reason for a gift of part of a field to be handled in a way different from its sale. Yet it was, and the reason is plain: the owner still had to pay revenue for it—and the share he donated (: this is speculation, now) may well have amounted to something like the net profit he derived from it: if it had been the entire field that he made over, the revenue he still had to pay would have taxed his remaining income.

7. This is a fact which is not without its social repercussions. Presumably from a regard for its own income, the state did not grant a normal *guthi* the privileges that many temples, *maths*, or *brāhmaṇas* enjoyed: such donations of limited appeal were not exempt from tax.

One part of the people's reactions the documents show: although the legal construction was anything but stable, we see a constant stream of new *guthis* emerge, for a veritable host of purposes, to administer even minute trusts. Their members were held together by the common task of controlling each other in the administration of donations, by the common feasts that the documents so often provide for; they were held together by favours which it was in the power of the *guthi* to bestow: loans the interest of which at times was lower than the current rate, down to the instance of N.S. 709 where a donor had a codicil added which says a borrower just has to replace what he took, i.e. there was no interest to be charged. In a sense this is a parallel to the institutions called *dyahchems*, 'houses of gods', which apart from the space used by and for their deity usually contain rooms that at the discretion of the guardian are available to people in emergencies: to hold a feast when somebody lies ill in the house (: an eventual death would pollute the entire party), to accommodate families whose house has come down, etc.

And if one was looking for corroboration, one would find it in the terminology the Newars themselves use to designate their donations. In the Newārī part of the formula, the crucial word is 'inside', *du*, and its derivations. A donor causes his gift 'to be inside', *du juya*; even a simple *dumtā* will do, 'inside' or 'placed inside' (: which is the expression the documents can use as the Newārī equivalent of *sampradattam bhavati*). The *guthi* receives the donation, an act which is called *du kāya* 'to take inside'; the same phrase is used to denote the act of receiving someone into one's household: the elderly (e.g. in a document dated N.S. 793 *āṣāḍha śukla 6*), or a wife, or an adopted son.

The associations of the concept are sharply focussed by a term the documents use when dealing with the deity they call the 'Thrice Ven. Āryyāvalokiteśvara, the Revered', i.e. the famous Mātsyendranāth whose procession through the city, in his unwieldy chariot, forms such an important event in the annual festive calendar of Pāṭan. In its course, the statue spends some time in Gāḍa Bāhāl, where he is taken into its *sanc-tissimum*. In the documents, this place goes by the name of 'The Sacred Interior', *śrī-dum*. In choosing this designation with its lack of precision the documents very markedly point to its secrecy and inaccessibility—and by implication to the unity of the group which is held together by the worship of this particular manifestation of the divine.—Correspondingly, what goes to people who do not belong to the community (as to the low-caste tailors, the *jugi*, with their indispensable ritual functions), even what goes to the general public by way of entertainment at great festivals, is called 'what is placed outside', *pi te* etc. 'Inside' vs. 'outside', *du* vs. *pi*: this is the

most simple and straightforward of structural patterns.

It looks as if the state had decided to ignore its society when it was to its advantage to do so, and driven people to their own resources. They found them in abundance: one could well imagine the profusion of *guthis* to have been part of the answer. However this may be, there can be little doubt all this must have strengthened communal feelings, first in the positive sense of creating cohesion between members. But in withholding a favour which, to go by the *śāstra*, the people had every right to, the state achieved what was not a desirable result: it as it were incidentally created a division between the representatives of the Great Tradition and those others which provided for the services that everybody stood in need of.

Notes

1. Manusmṛti Medhātithibhāṣya-samalaṅkṛtā. 1-2. Calcutta 1967-71 (Guru-maṇḍalagranthamālā. 24), p.790.
2. There are a few variants to the term which make the meaning more explicit than the usual wording with its religious overtones. N.S.781, N.S.822 have *dāmayā klantra* 'the interest of the money', N.S.807, *vraṣaṃ prati klantra lyākhana* 'the sum of the annual interest', etc.
3. At the beginning of his explanation of Manu 8.180, Medhātithi distinguishes between sealed and unsealed, witnessed and unwitnessed (*samudram amudram sasākṣikam asākṣikam*) deposits: *loc. cit.*, p.790.
4. For the *nikṣepa-* in the Arthaśāstra, see E. Ritschl and M. Schetelich, Studien zum Kauṭilīya Arthaśāstra, Berlin 1973, pp.198ff.; cfl. also B. Breloer, Kauṭalīya-Studien 2 (Bonn 1928), pp.97ff., 3 (Leipzig 1934), pp. 376ff.; H. Scharfe, Untersuchungen zur Staatsrechtslehre des Kauṭalya (Wiesbaden 1968), pp.137, 287.
5. Cf. Ritschl/Schetelich, *loc. cit.*, p.200: 'Vertrauen, das an sich beim Depositum eine große Rolle spielte, [...] scheint in den Beziehungen zwischen Handwerkern und Auftraggebern nicht immer genügt zu haben.'
6. The Nāradaśmṛti critically ed. with an introd., annotated transl., and appendices by R. W. Lariviere. Pt. 1-2. Philadelphia 1989, Pt.1, p.137.
7. The Institutes of Nārada ed. by J. Jolly Calcutta 1885, p.130.
8. or: without informing him
9. Lariviere takes *sodayam* to be a repetitive amplification of *dandyaḥ* and renders it by 'plus a penalty' (II, p.97). The sense would plead against this interpretation. The property deposited of course is the depositor's, and not the trustee's, which is why in all fairness the income gained from it ought to go to the owner of the capital: a case similar to the commissioned sellers of goods who, according to Kauṭ. 3.12.25 or 30 *mūlyam udayam ca dadyuḥ* 'should give the price and the profit' to the owner.— Taken by itself, *udaya-* can of course mean any kind of increment, the penalty not excluded: but the parallels make it most likely it means 'interest' in the passage

discussed. This is how Asahāya understands the term: he says *sopāśrayam*, i.e. together with what rests upon it: the *āśraya*-, the basis of the transaction, is the capital deposited; its *upāśraya*-, the income derived from it. The closest parallel is Yājñavalkya 2.67, a verse which says that for a *nikṣepa*- as for other objects deposited with someone not the owner, *ājīvan svecchayādaṇḍyo dāpyas taṃ cāpi sodayam*, 'he who uses them according to his wish is to be punished, and should be made to return it together with the increment'—which 'increment' to Vijñāneśvara is the interest (*savṛddhikam*), and he apparently does not take it in the sense of current rates, but as the sum actually obtained (*salābham*): Yājñavalkyasmṛti ... with the commentary Mitākṣarā ... Fifth ed. ... by Narayan Ram Acharya, Bombay 1949, p.178.

10. From N.S.730, we have a document recording a loan (*hastoddhāra*) from such funds which shows a *guṭhi* actually pursuing what in spite of its modest scale can be called banking activities.
11. See, e.g., the Āśā Saphū Kuthi mss. *Vaidya* No. 432 (a *guṭhi* 'functioning as lending and borrowing institution', p.93f.), No. 438 ('lending, interest, harvest and functions of the *guṭhi* noted', p.95), No. 440, p.96), etc.
12. A brief synopsis is found in *D.C. Sircar*, *Indian Epigraphy* (Delhi 1965), pp.114ff.

NEPAUL TO NEPAL: PLACE-NAMES IN TWO EARLY ACCOUNTS

Harka Gurung

The first ever book on Nepal in the English language was published in 1811 from London. The content of the book had been drafted before 10 November 1793. This refers to *An Account of the Kingdom of Nepaul* by William Kirkpatrick. The book title was further qualified as 'Being the Substance of Observations Made During A Mission to That Country.' The catalogue of William Miller listed it as one of 129 principal books published by them up to the spring of 1811. The account is based on Kirkpatrick's seven weeks (13 February – 3 April 1793) visit to the then winter (Nuwakot) and Summer (Kathmandu) capitals of Nepal.

The second such book, *An Account of the Kingdom of Nepal* by Dr. Francis Buchanan Hamilton, was published in 1819 from Edinburgh. The book title was further appended as 'And of the Territories Annexed to the Dominion by the House of Gorkha'. Hamilton spent 14 months (1st February 1802-16 March 1803) in Kathmandu and another two years along Nepal's tarai frontier. The writing seems to have been completed by 1814 as the Gorkha dominion described by Hamilton pertains to its maximum territorial extent.

These two earliest accounts refer to Nepal between her two major wars, first with Tibet/China and then the East India Company. Both accounts are products of official commissioning as evidenced by the dedications – Kirkpatrick's to Lord Cornwallis and that of Hamilton to Richard Marquis Wellesley, both Governors General in Council. Kirkpatrick's Nepal visit was in the nature of mediation but the purpose had been pre-empted by Nepal's submission to Tibet-Chinese forces. Hamilton's more thorough work based on several native informants was basically intelligence gathering that certainly came handy during the Anglo-Nepal War 1814-16. Both in rendition of place-names – Kirkpatrick's 'Nepal' and 'Khatmandu' vs Hamilton's 'Nepal' and 'Kathmandu' – as well as description, there is a clear evidence of increasing knowledge regarding the country during the intervening period of about twelve years between the two accounts.

Kirkpatrick was certainly breaking a new ground as he refers to his work as a 'Memoir' and his destination as 'Terra Incognita': His book commences with 'Construction of the Map' (pp. 3-7) as preliminary observations. However, the resultant output by Lt. J. Gerrard is not a general map of the country but rather route map of areas traversed. Moreover, of the nine chapters, six are description of itineraries followed by the Mission. Chapter IX, particularly, provides details of staging-points and distances along the following major routes:

- | | |
|----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Butwal | – Beni |
| 2. Balrampur (India) | – Beni |
| 3. Kathmandu | – Beni |
| 4. Beni | – Jumla |
| 5. Nuwakot | – Achham |
| 6. Achham | – Srinagr (Garhwal) |
| 7. Nuwakot | – Dzonkha (Tibet) |
| 8. Kathmandu | – Gosainkund |
| 9. Kathmandu | – Shigatse (Tibet) |
| 10. Kathmandu | – Sekhardzong (Tibet) |
| 11. Kathmandu | – Bijayapur |
| 12. Bijayapur | – Dalimkot (Bhutan) |

In contrast to the linear geography of Kirkpatrick, the descriptions provided by Hamilton are regional account of the territories. Part one of the book, deals with people, geography and administration. The second part is a valuable record in separate sections on discrete political units under the Gorkhali hegemony. These include Sikkim, Sen dominions, Nepal proper, Baisi-Chaubisi and Kumaon-Garhwal-Barh Thakuri. In the supplement are given notes on twelve petty chiefdoms of Western Himalaya. The accompanying 'Map of the Dominions of the House of Gorkha' includes all territories between the Tista and Ravi rivers. Appended at end but not listed in the table of contents are five engravings of panoramic views of mountains from the Kathmandu Valley.

Hamilton made the following observation in referring to Kirkpatrick's book: "I must here, however, in a general way, caution the reader to place little confidence in the names given in the printed work." His rendition of native terms and names was an improvement over that of Kirkpatrick. But an earlier extract from Father Giuseppe's "Account of the kingdom of Nepal" in *Asiatic Researches* (Vol. II, No. 17, 1807, pp. 307-322) had even more ornate renderings. These included Ciratas (Kirants), Gainprejas (Jaya Prakash), Gorcha/Gorchians (Gorkha/Gorkhalis), Lamji (Lamjung), Marecajis (Makwanis), Siduli (Sindhuli) and so on.

The accompanying appendix includes terms, mostly place-names, derived from the two accounts. Of these, 75.8 percent are from Kirkpatrick (column 1) and 44.7 percent from Hamilton (column 2). Column three is an attempt to identify the names/terms as rendered in the accounts. Of these, about two dozen place-names could not be identified or located. The compilation may be of interest to historians with spatial perspective.

Appendix Identification of Place-Names and Terms

S.No.	Kirkpatrick	Hamilton	Should Be	Remark/Area
1.	Abou-wa-baisi	—	Abubeñsi	Gorkha
2.	Acham	Acham	Achhām	lordship
3.	—	Achar	Achārya	caste (priest)
4.	Adha-bhar	—	Adābār	Parsa
5.	Agrye	—	Āgarī	caste (Smelter)
6.	Ahudi Rolah	—	Añdhi Kholā	Nowakot
7.	—	Alangchang	Wālungchung	mart
8.	Almorab	Almorha	Almorā	Kumaon
9.	Almbeah-gauteh	—	Amgoth	s. of Churiaghati
10.	—	Argha	Arghā	lordship
11.	Argong	—	Arghouñ	Kaski
12.	—	Arhung	Arung	Stream
13.	Assaur	—	Asār	month
14.	Audhi-Khola	—	Adhi Kholā	see 6
15.	Augun	—	Asol	month
16.	Aukhoo	—	Āñkh	river
17.	Bagloo-Choor	Baglung Chaur	Bāglung	town, Parbat-
18.	Bahauras	Bangra/Baryesu	Bāñrā	caste (metal worker)
19.	Balkote	—	Belkot	Nawakot
20.	Bala Neel-Khent	—	Bālāju	shrine, Kathmandu
21.	Balchet	—	Bhārku	Rasuwa
22.	—	Balihang	Balihāng	Palpa
23.	bamphi	Bangphi	Bāñphi	lordship
24.	Bansi	Baisi/Baeessi	Bāsi	22 lordships
25.	—	Bandi	Bandipur	tanahu
26.	Bandicote	—	?	Pyuthan
27.	—	Bangra	Bāñrā	caste (Newar)

28.	-	Bara Nilkantha	Budā-Nilkantha	shrine, Kathmandu
29.	-	Barigar	?	mart, Khanchi
30.	Bareh/Barra-gharry	Baragarhi	Bārāgarhi	Bara
31.	-	Barigar	Barī Gād	river
32.	Bara-gharry	Baragarhi	Bārāgarhi	see 30
33.	-	Baryesu	Bāñrā	see 18
34.	Bassinder	Basandra	Bilāspur	capital, Dailekh
35.	rechlacori	Bichhakor	Bichhekori	custom post
36.	Beenishehr	Beniji/Benishahar	Beni	Parbat
37.	Behri-nuddi	-	Bheri	river
38.	Bejapur	Vijayapur	Bijayapur	Capital, Morang
39.	Bejjerban	-	Vajrabān	thunderbolt
40.	Bettrouilli	Bitrawati	Betrāvati	river, Nawakot
41.	-	Beyas	Byāñs	Darchula
42.	Bhagmutty - I	Vagmati	Bāgmati	river
43.	Bhagmutty - II	-	Bungmti	town
44.	Bahla-bang	-	Bhālubāng	Pyuthan
45.	Bhalkoo/Balchet	-	Bhārku	see 21
46.	Bharia-kot	-	?	Surkhet
47.	Bhatgong	Bhatgang	Bhātgaōñ	town
48.	Bhautia/Bhootia	Bhotiya	Bhoṭia	culture group
49.	bheagamestal	-	Begnās Tāl	lake, Kaski
50.	Bheem-phede	Bhimphedi	Bhimpedi	staging-point
51.	Bheerbhudder-koodeh	-	Bhairavkund	lake, Gosainkund
52.	Bherbundy	-	Bmandhungā	Nawakot
53.	-	Bhelaunji	Pitauñji	ferry-point, Narayani
54.	Boorchadanga	Bhenhangga	Bhimḍhungā	near Thankot
55.	Bhim-doka	Bhenhngga	Bhimḍhungā	see 54
56.	Bhisnumuty	-	Bishnumati	stream
57.	Bhoodoo-singbaisi	-	Baḍasingbeñsi	Dhunibensi
58.	Bhoomuri-kote	Bhingri	Bhiñgri	lordship
59.	Bhoot/Bhootan	Bhotan/Bhotias	Bhuṭān	country
60.	Bhowareh	-	Bhumre	Bhirkot (modern Waling)
61.	Bhuddur-joogni	-	Vairajogini	tantrik shrine, Sankhu
62.	Bhugajoondo	-	Bokejhungā	near Dhunche, Rasuwa
63.	Bhugowty	-	Bhagwati	shrine, Palanchok

64.	–	Bhujal	Bhujel	people, Bhujj valley
65.	Bhunjan	–	Bhanjyāṅg	saddle, pass
66.	Bhurkot	Birkot	Bhirkot	lordship
67.	Bhyroo	–	Bhairav	trantric deity
68.	Biasi	–	Beñsi	valley bottom
69.	Billye/Billarie	–	Billari	stream
70.	Birtha	Birtha	Birtā	land gant
71.	Boe-khail	–	Bisingkhel	Chitlang valley
			Chitlang	
72.	Boggah	Bakra	Bagāh	Bihar
73.	Boglepore	–	Bhāglapur	town, Bihar
74.	Boorhadanga/Bhim-doka	Bhenhngga	Bhimdhungā	near Thankot
75.	Boora-Gunduck	–	Buṛi Gaṇḍaki	river, Gorkha
76.	Boordebang	–	Burtibāṅg	Parbat
77.	Bootoul/Bootwal	Butaul	Buṭwal	town
78.	Boudha	Bouddhama	Bauddha	shrine, Kathmandu
79.	Boudh Pouran	–	Buddha Purāṇa	religious text
80.	–	Boudhists	Buddhism	religion
81.	Boutan	Thibet	Tibet	country
82.	Brhemoter	Birtha	Birtā	see 70
83.	Bujjur-joogni/ Bhuddur-joogni	–	Vajrajogini	see 61
84.	Bukkia	–	Bakiyā	stream
85.	Bulhang	–	Bajhāṅg	lordship
86.	Bullephee	–	Balephi	Sindhu
87.	Bulliwa	–	Balewā	Parbat
88.	Bunuipa/Bunepa	–	Banepā	town
89.	Buuttola-choor	Buttolachoor	Bāṭulechaur	winter capital, Kaski
90.	Buttye	–	Baṭaiyā	share-cropping
91.	Bysack	–	Baisākh	month
92.	Cachouriva	–	Chirchiria	steam, Bara
93.	Cashmerians	Kashmirians	Kāshmiri	steam, Bara
94.	Chakhura/Chakooria	–	Chyākhure	
			Lāṅgna	pass to Jumla
95.	Cham	–	?	lordship
96.	–	Champawati	Champāwat	Kumaon
97.	Chandraghiri	Chandangiri	Chandragiri	ridge

98.	–	Changiya	Chyangthāpu	pass to Sikkim
99.	Changoo-nerain	Changgu Narayan	Chāngu Narayan	shrine
100.	Chapigong	–	Chāpāgaon	s. of Patan
101.	–	Chaudanda	Chaudandī	Udayapur
102.	–	Changora	Chaughaḍā	Dang
103.	Chanurem	–	Chāhār	Land class, grade IV
104.	Cheeriaghati	Chiriyaghat	Churiaghāṭi	pass
105.	Cheesapany/Chusapany	Chisapani	Chisāpāni	fortress
106.	Chempa-daibi	–	Champādevi	hill
107.	Chepiak-Kola	–	Chepe Kholā	river
108.	Chhinnachin	Chhinnachhin	Chhinasim	capital, Jumla
109.	Chhung-tapoo	Changiya	Chyāngthāpu	see 98
110.	–	Chilli	Jhilli	lordship
111.	Chinepoor/Chynepoor	Chayenpur	Chainpur	town, Limbuan
112.	Chitlang/Lohari	Chitlang/Lahuri	Chitlāng	valley
113.	Chooli	–	Chuli	peak, summit
114.	Choprah	–	Chhaprā	town, Bihar
115.	Chownrigolah	–	Chomolhāri	mountain, Bhutan
116.	Choutra	–	Chautārā	Sindhu
117.	Chowbeisi	Chaubisi/ Chaubisiya	Chaubisi	24 lordships
118.	Chucker-teerut	–	Chakratiratha	
119.	Chundais-sere	–	Chandeswari	shrine, Banepa
120.	Chuprigong	–	?	Kathmandu Valley
121.	Chusapany	Chisapani	Chisāpāni	see 105
122.	Chutter	–	Chhathar	six castes/clans
123.	Cottahs	–	kaṭṭā	Land measure, Tarai
124.	Chynepoor	Chayenpur	Chainpur	see 111
125.	Chyte	–	Chait	month
126.	Daiby Ghaut	Devighat	Devighāt	river confluence, Nawakot
127.	–	Dalka	Dolakhā	town
128.	–	Dalu Dailek	Dullu-Dailekh	lordship
129.	Dalingcote	Dakinkot	Dālimkoṭ	Bhutan
130.	–	Danakoti	Dānākoṭhi	custom-post, Mustang
131.	Darimeca	–	? Dārmā	lordship
132.	–	Degarchi	–	town, Tibet

133.	Deh-choak/Dhochoak	–	Dahachok	ridge, Kathmandu
134.	Deo Ghaut	Dewghat	Deoghāt	Kali-Gandadi and Trisuli confluence
135.	Deopatan	Dweapatan	Devapāṭan	Kathmandu
136.	–	Dewghat	Deoghāt	see 134
137.	Dewa Durmah	–	Deva	ruler, Bhutan
			Dhamarājā	
138.	Dhalk/Dhoalka	Dalka	Dolakhā	town
139.	Dhalka/Dhoalka	Dalka	Dolakhā	town
140.	Dhaudhi-ghaut	–	? Darondi-ghat	Gorkha
141.	–	Dhankut/Dhankot	Dhankuṭā	town
142.	Dhemcha/Dhoonchu	Dhunchi	Dhunche	Rasuwa
143.	–	Dharma	Dārmā	Kumaon
144.	Dhenwar	Aniwar	Danuwar	tribe
145.	Dherimsilli/Dherim-tulla	Dherim-tulla	Dharamthali	on way to Kakani
146.	Dhoar	Dhor	Ḍhor	lordship
147.	Dhoalka	–	Dolkhā	see 139
148.	Dhochoak	–	Dahachok	see 134
149.	Dholat-ghat	–	Dolālghāt	ferry-crossing, Sunkosi
150.	–	Dhoral Thana	Ḍholthān	capital, Parbat
151.	Dhoocho/Dhoonchu	Dhunchi	Dhunche	see 142
152.	Dhoogna	–	Dugungarhi	fort, near Kodari
153.	Dhoolkill	–	Dhulikhel	town
154.	Dhoomjah	–	Dumjā	Sunkosi-Rosi confluence
155.	Dhoor-kote	Dhurkot	Dhurkoṭ	lordship
156.	–	Dhoral	Deorāli	pass, saddle
157.	Dhotee	Duti	Doṭi	lordship
158.	Dhoulager	–	Dhaulāgiri	mountain
159.	–	Dhumpu	Dhampu	
160.	Dhurumdee	–	Daroñdi	river, Gorkha
161.	Dhyboon	Dhayabung	Dhaibung	mountain, Nuwakot
162.	Diggerchek	Degarchi	Shigatse	see 132
163.	–	Dimali	Dhimāl	tribe
164.	–	Dipal	Dipāl	capital, Doti
165.	–	Dobhang	Dobhān	river confluence
166.	Doem	–	Doyām	land class, grade II

167.	Dooharia	Duyariya	Dwāre	functionary
168.	Doona-baisi	—	Dhunibensi	W. of Thankot
169.	Douja	—	?	caste (Newar)
170.	Doulu Bassender	Dalu Basandra	Dullu-Bilāspur	lordship
171.	Dukhen Kali	—	Dakshinkālī	Tantrik shrine, Kathmandu
172.	Dummodhurkundeeh	Damodar Kund	Damodar Kund	Mustang
173.	Dunh Koota	Dhankut/Dhankot	Dhankutā	see 141
174.	Durfoon-ghaut	—	?	Gorkha
175.	Durpoo-ghaut	—	Tharpughāt	beside Kali- Gandaki
176.	—	Dweapatan	Deupāṭan	see 135
177.	—	Duti	Doṭi	see 157
178.	Dyliek	Dalu Dailek	Dailekh	see 128
179.	—	Emodus	Himalaya	snow range
180.	Fookacha	—	Ṭukucha	stream, Kathmandu
181.	—	Gadaruk	Ghāndrung	Parbat
182.	—	Galjal	?	lordship
183.	—	Gajarkot	Garjyāngkot	Jumla
184.	—	Gandhauk	Gāngtok	capital, Sikkim
185.	—	Gandi	Gandaki	river
186.	Gangdol/Gundhoop	Gandhauk	Gāngtok	see 184
187.	Gangrong	Gadaruk	Ghāndruk	see 181
188.	—	Gar Pasara	Garh-Parsā	
189.	—	Gar Samaran	Garh-Simraun	rains
190.	—	Garahang	Garhuñ	lordship
191.	—	Gengdi	Gyāñdi	Parbat
192.	Ghaya	—	Ghaiyā	upland rice
193.	Ghering	Ghiring	Ghiring	lordship
194.	Gehrjung-kote	Gajarkot	Garjyāngkot	see 183
195.	Gehrwai	Garhawal	Garhwāl	
196.	Ghokurna/Gorja-siree	—	Gokarna	shrine
197.	Ghooriya-kote	—	?	lordship
198.	Ghoorkha	Gorkha	Gorkhā	capital, Gorkha
199.	Ghum-kote	—	Gamgarhi	near Rara
200.	Ghunnaishi	—	Ganesh	deity
201.	Ghar semroure	Gar Samaran	Garh-simraun	see 189
202.	Ghurry-gong	—	Garhigāon	Jumla
203.	Ghyah	Gaya	Gayā	India
204.	—	Gongkor	Gāikhur	Nawakot

205.	Goojoore-tar	—	Gajuritār	beside Trisuli river
206.	Goolpussra	Gar Pasara	Garh-Parsā	see 188
207.	Gorkhas/Goorkhali	Gorkha/Gorkhalis	Gorkhāli	subject of Gorkha
208.	Gooshja Kali/Gooje-serri/Gorja-siree	Guhyiswari	guheswari	shrine
209.	—	Gosaignsthan	Gosāiṅkund	peak, Nawakot
210.	Gossainthan	Nilkantha	Gosāiṅkund	lake
211.	Gootum	Gooum	Gotām	lordship
212.	Gorja-sirre	—	Gokarna	see 196
213.	Gram/	—	Grāng	Rasuwa
214.	Gulkoat	Galkot	Galkoṭ	lordship
215.	Gundhoop	Gandhank	Gāngtok	see 184
216.	Gundi	Gandi/Gandaki	Gandaki	see 185
217.	Gunnash/	—	Ganesh	see 200
218.	Gurhoo/	Garahang	Garhuñ	lordship
219.	Gurram	—	Grāng	see 213
220.	Gurrohoo	Garahang	Garhuñ	see 190 & 218
221.	Gurruhkote	Garahang	Garhuñ	see 190 & 218
222.	—	Halesi/Kaleshi	Halesi	Khotang
223.	Hannumunta	—	Hanumante	stream
224.	—	Hedang	Hedāngnā	upper Arun
225.	Hemouret-kund/	—	Himvatkhand	religious text
226.	Hettowra	Hethaura	Heṭaḍā	mart
227.	Himma-leh	Himaleh	Himālaya	see 179
228.	Howoo/Hyoos	—	Hāyu	tribe
229.	Hunniman	—	hanumān	Monkey God
230.	Humbarpoor	Haribarpur	Hariharpur	fortress
231.	Hurruunt-kund	—	Himavatkhanda	see 225
232.	Huttea	Hatiya	Haṭiyā	mart, upper Arun
233.	Huttioul	—	Hathiaul	frontier-post, Rautahat
234.	Hyoos	—	Hāyu	see 228
235.	Indiani-nuddi	—	Indrāwati	river
236.	Jagaisher	—	jagannāth	shrine, panauti
237.	Jait	—	Jeṭh	month
238.	Janickpoor	Janak Poor	Janakpur	Capital, Mithila
239.	Jajurkot	Jajarkot	Jājarkoṭ	lordship
240.	Japoo	—	Jyāpur	peasant (Newar)
241.	—	Jar	Jāḍ	Bhotia
242.	—	Jariya	Jāḍ	see above

243.	–	Jausis	Jaisi	caste (Brahmin)
244.	–	Jayagir	Jāgir	emolument
245.	Jehari	Jahari	Jāhāri	lordship
246.	Jhilli	Chilli	Jhilli	lordship
247.	Jhurjhoory	–	Jhurjhure	near Churighati
248.	Jibjibia	–	?	mountain
249.	–	Jimri/Rapti	Jhimruk	river, Pyuthan
250.	–	Jirikampti	Jiri-Khimti	
251.	Joobinga	–	Jholuñgo	suspension bridge
252.	Joongah	–	Dzonkhā	town, Tibet
253.	–	Joyar	Johār	Kumaon
254.	Judpur		Jitpur	below Kakani
255.	Joomlah/Jumlah	Yumila	Jumlā	lordship
256.	Jumne	–	Jāmuni	stream, Bara
257.	Jumri-Kote	–	?	Jumla
258.	Kabhria	–	Kābhre	Nawakot
259.	Kagbeini	Kagkoti	Kāgbeni	Mustang
260.	–	Kagkoti	Kāgbēni	see above
261.	Kagnos	Kanguni	Kāgunu	grain (Panicum italicum)
262.	Kaiski/Kashki	Kaishi-shehr/ Kaski	Kāski	Lordship
263.	Kaith	–	Khet	irrigated land
264.	Kalagong	Kalagong	?	lordship
265.	–	Kalesi	Halesi	see 222
266.	Kaliachok	–	Kālinchok	ridge
267.	Kali-nuddi/Gunduck	Kali/Narayani/ Krishna/Shaligrami	Kali-Gāṇḍaki	river
268.	–	Kamiya	Kumāiñ	western Brahmin
269.	Kamroof	Kamrup	Kāmarup	Assam
270.	–	Kanguni	Kāgunu	see 261
271.	–	Karara	Karrā	stream, Hetauda
272.	Karki-nitta	–	Kārkinēṭa	Parbat
273.	–	Karuvirpura	Kartipura	Kumaon
274.	–	Kasacheit	Khāsti	Bauddha, Kathmandu
275.	–	Kasuliya	Kusule	caste (Newar)
276.	Kath Bhootias	Kath Bhotiya	Kāṭ-Bhoṭe	Tamang
277.	Kantic	–	Kātik	month
278.	Kemaon	Kumau	Kumāoñ	

279.	Keramaddun	—	?	near Gyandi
280.	Kerraut/Kurraute	Kirat/Kichak	Kirāñt	tribe
281.	Kertipore/Kirthipoor	Kirtipur	Kirtipur	town
282.	—	Khachi	Khāñchi	lordship
283.	Khahootal	—	Māste Tāl	lake, Kaski
284.	Khargoo	—	Mārkhū	Chitlang
285.	Khartah	—	Khārtā	Tibet
286.	—	Khas/Khasant	Khasān	Khasa territory
287.	—	Khatang	Khoṭāng	Majh-kirant
288.	—	Kheran/Kheru	Kyirong	mart, Tibet
289.	Kherkotuck	—	?	near Sankhu
290.	Kheeroo	Kerung/Kheran/ Kheru	Kyirong	see 288
291.	—	Khidim	?	lordship
292.	Khopodaise	Khopo Daise	Khopa	Bhaktapur
293.	Khum-thathi	—	?	?Thum-thanti, Syangja
294.	Khus	Khas/Khasiya/ Khatri	Khasa	people (Caucasoid)
295.	Khusa	—	Khāsā	Tibet
296.	—	Kichak	Kirāñt	see 280
297.	Kichria	—	Chure	stream
298.	Koakna	Koakna	Khoknā	Patan
299.	Koith	—	?Kāgate	language
300.	Kohrya-I	Kuriya	Khoriyo	unirrigated land
301.	Kohrya-II	Kuriya	Kuriyā	tenant household
302.	Koolpoo-dobhan	—	Kalphu-dobhān	Trisuli-Kalphu confluence
303.	Koomhara	—	Kumārīḍāñḍā	ridge
304.	Koorkoat-ghant	—	Khurkoṭ	beside Sunkosi
305.	Koosmachoor	Kusma	Kusmā	Parbat
306.	Koote/Kooti	Kutti	Kuti	mart, Tibet
307.	Kota	—	Khoṭo	turpentine
308.	Kotes	—	Koṭ	fort
309.	Kowhilai-peak	—	Kāule	ridge
310.	Kow-II-kan	Panauni	Kulekhāni	steam
311.	Kuchar	Kuchar	?	northern region
312.	Kukunni	—	Kakani	ridge
313.	—	Kurarbas	Kadarban	frontier-post
314.	Kurnala	Karnali/Kurnali	Kamāli	river

315.	–	Kuriya-I	Khoriyo	see 300
316.	–	Kuriya-II	Kuriyā	see 301
317.	Kurmi-bhunjan	–	?	Gorkha
318.	Kurra	Karara	Karrā	see 271
319.	Kurrapootar	–	Karpuṭār	Lamjung
320.	Kurraute	–	Kirāñit	see 280
321.	Kurroorbunna	Kurarbas	Kadarbana	see 313
322.	Kushen-kosen	–	Khoyāng-Khusyung	steam, Bhaktapur
323.	–	Lahaur	Lahore	Punjab
324.	–	Lahuri	Chitlang	see 112
325.	Lakhajoong-baisi	–	Lamjung-beñsi	Bensishahar
326.	–	Lamja	Nāmche	mart
327.	–	Lam Dangra	Lāmidñā	ridge
328.	–	Lapcha	Lepchā	tribe
329.	Lastie	–	Listi	near Kodari
330.	Lawhribinna	–	Lauribñā	Rasuwa
331.	Lebhoora	Leghuya	Leguwā	ferry-point, Arun
332.	Lehasa	Lassa	Lhasa	capital, Tibet
333.	–	Lengleng	Lyānglyāng	iron mine, Ramechhap
334.	Limboas	Limbu	Limbu	tribe
335.	Lohori	Lahuri	Chitlāng	see 112
336.	Loomjoong/Lumjoon Sumjoong	Lamjun.	Lamjung	lordship
337.	Luckwa-Bussiari	–	Lamjung- Beñsishāhar	winter capital
338.	Luddakh	Ladak	Ladākḥ	
339.	Lumbabeggar	–	Lāmobagar	Parbat
340.	–	Lum	Num	upper Arun
341.	Lungoor	–	Langur	high ridge
342.	Luttohoon	Satahung	Satauñ	lordship
343.	Lykhoo	–	Likhu	river
344.	Machia pochur	–	Māchhāpuchhre	mountain peak
345.	Mahabahr	Lama Dangra	Mahābhārat Lekh	range
346.	Mahadeo-baisi	–	Mahādevheñsi	
347.	–	Mahatari	Mahotañ	
348.	Mahdi-nuddi	–	Mādi	river, Kaski
349.	–	Mahes Domohana	Mahesh Dobhān	Trisuli-Mahesh confluence

350.	–	Malebema	Mālebam	lordship, parbat
351.	Mangur/Muggur	Mager	Magar	tribe
352.	–	marichangdi	Marsyāndi	river
353.	Medine Mull	–	?	ridge
354.	Mehagdi	Mayangdi	Myāgdi	river, Parbat
355.	Mehenkai	–	Mahākāli	deity
356.	Mhanjees	Majhi	Mājhi	tribe
357.	–	Misal	Nisāl	people, Nisi valley
358.	Mizaria	–	Mijār	caste
359.	Mohtuni	Mahatari	Mahotari	see 347
360.	Morries	Muri	Muri	Measure of grain
361.	Morung/Moruny	Morang	Morang	
362.	Moruny	Morang	Morang	see above
363.	–	Mosihang	Masyāng	Palpa
364.	Muckye	–	Makai	Maize
365.	Muckwanpore	Makwanpur	Makwānpur	fort, lordship
366.	Muggar	–	Magar	see 351
367.	Mullijauta	–	Malnetā	lordship
368.	Mulli-bum	Malebum/ Malebamba	Mālebam	see 350
369.	Munkamana	–	Manakāmanā	Tantric shrine, Gorkha
370.	Munniary	–	Monlāri	–
371.	Munnokra	–	Manoharā	stream
372.	Mursiangdi	Marichangdi	Marsyāngdi	see 352
373.	Naga-Arjun	Nagarjun	Nāgarjun	Hill, Kathmandu
374.	Nagoon-Kote	–	Nāgmā	Jumla
375.	–	Narayani	Dzong-kyu	stream, Muktinath
376.	–	Nayakot	Nuwakoṭ	lordship
377.	Noakote/Nuwakote	Nayakot	Nuwakoṭ	see above
378.	Neekhoo	–	Nakhu	stream
379.	Neelkhent	Nilkantha	Gosainkund	see lake
380.	Nerjah	–	?	Nawakot
381.	–	Nilkantha	Gosainkund	see 379
382.	Nimbootan/Nimboo-tar	–	Nibuatār	near Bhimphedi
383.	Noel-ghurr	–	Nārāyangaṛṇ (ghat)	ferry-point, Chitawan
384.	Nuggerkootees	–	Nagarkoṭi	caste (Chhetri)
385.	Nussi-bhauja	–	Nishi-Bhuji	s. of Dhorpatan
386.	Oopadroong	Upadrang	Upardāng	fortress

387.	Ooter-Khund	—	Uttar Khand	religious text
388.	Ondipoor/Ummirpore	—	Udayapur	fortress
389.	Owl	Ayul	Aul	malaria
390.	Paloong-tar	—	Pipaltār	Nawakot
391.	Palsoong-tar	—	Paluntār	Gorkha
392.	—	Panauni	Kulekhāni	
393.	Pangdhoor	—	Pauñdur	Kaski
394.	Paugla/Pangleh	—	Pāng	Parbat
395.	Pannipa	—	Banepā	see 88
396.	Papigong	—	?	Kathmandu valley
397.	—	Papti	Popti	mountain, pass
398.	—	pasara	Parsā	
399.	Patra-I	—	Batrā	in tarai
340.	Patra-II	—	Phaṭuwā	
401.	Paure	—	Pāñḍe	caste
402.	—	Pauriyāl	Pouḍel	caste (Brahmin)
403.	Peepra Rajepore	—	Piprā	Bara
404.	Perjah	Praja	Prajā	tenant, subject
405.	Persa	Pasara	Parsā	
406.	—	Pesaur	Peshāwar	Punjab
407.	Phalchoak	—	Pālchok	Sindhu
408.	Phakheil Kurrug	—	Pākheḷ	Chitlang
409.	—	Phalabam	Phālābāng	Sallyan
410.	Phalchoak	Pulihu	Phulchoki	hill-top, Patan
411.	Phallanchoak	—	Palānchok	Kabre
412.	Phaphum	—	Phāpar	buckweat
413.	Pharkoo	—	Bhārku	Rasuwa
414.	Pheerping/Phurping	—	Pharping	Kathmandu
415.	Pheroatal	—	Phewā Tāl	lake, Kaski
416.	Phullak	—	?	pass to Tibet
417.	Phurha-bhirja-kote	—	Phlyāngkoṭ	Kaski
418.	Pisan-Keel	—	Pasāngkhel	Chitlang
419.	Poakra	Pokhara	Pokharā	town, Kaski
420.	—	Poin	Payuñ	lordship
421.	Pooch-hi-ghaut	—	Puchighāt	ferry-point, Sunkosi
422.	Postong	—	Pustun	Lamjung
423.	Pourwa	—	Powā	rest-hourse
424.	Pukbhujā	—	Pachbhaiyā	ridge, Kaski
425.	—	Pulihu	Phulchoki	see 410
426.	Punchuk-hut	—	Panch-khat	severe crime

427.	Punhoti/Tannohi	—	Panauti	
428.	Punjuni	—	Pajani	annual review
429.	Purbat	Parbat	Parbat	lordship
430.	Purrewa-pheer	—	Parewābhir	Churiaghati
431.	Purthana	Piuthana	Piuthan	lordship
432.	Pussputty-nath	Pasupatinath	pashupatināth	shrine
433.	Pyoon	Poin	Payuñ	see 420
434.	Py-ying	—	Payuñ	see above
435.	Raghapoor	—	Rānipauwā	Nawakot
436.	Ragho-pouwa	—	Rānipauwā	Kaski
437.	—	Rainam	Rangit	river, Sikkim
438.	Ranghey	—	Rang-ghāt	ferry-point, Bheri
439.	Rapti/Rapute	Raputi	Rāpti	stream
440.	Reesing	Rising	Rising	lordship
441.	—	Riti	Niti	pass, Kumaon
442.	Roalpa	Roalpa	Rolpā	lordship
443.	Rhohututt/Rohhut	Rohuttut	Rautahat	
444.	—	Rohani	?	tribe
445.	—	Rohuttut	Rautahat	see 443
446.	Roogum	Rugun	Rukum	lordship
447.	Roopani	—	Ropani	land measure
448.	—	Rugun	Rukum	see 446
449.	Runbang	—	Rāngāng	Parbat
450.	Rurighat	Rerighat	Riri	Palpa
451.	Russooa	—	Rasuwā	frontier post
452.	Saite	Setigangga	Seti	river, kaski
453.	Sakkatie/Sukti	—	Sakti/Pasāh	stream
454.	—	Salayu	Sarayu	river, India
455.	Saliana/Sulheyan/ Sulian	Saliyana	Sallyān	lordship
456.	—	Sambhunath	Swayambhunāth	shrine
457.	—	Samrigarhi	Sangurigarhi	n. of Bijayapur
458.	—	Sankosi	Sunkosi	river
459.	Sangoori-ghung	Samrigarhi	Sangurigarhi	see 457
460.	Sankoo/Sanku	Sangghu	Sāñkhu	town
461.	—	Satatala	?	territory
462.	Sauren	—	Sāun	month
463.	—	Sayn	Saiñ	Bhotia
464.	Seedly/Sudooli	Sinduli	Sindhuli	fortress
465.	Seepa	—	Sipā	Sindhu
466.	Seker-nerin	—	Sheshnārāyan	Shrine, Pharping

467.	–	Seksula	Syāksilā	upper Arun
468.	Semroun/ Ghursemroure	Gar Samaran	Simrāungarh	see 189
469.	Seom	–	Sim	land category, grade III
470.	Serinugur	Sringagar	Shrinagar	capital, Garhwal
471.	Seriva	–	Serhwā	Rautahat
472.	Sheopoori	Shivapuri/ Siwapuri	Shivapuri	hill, Kathmandu
473.	–	Sheshant	Sikles	Kaski
474.	Shikargong	–	Shekharadzong	fort, Tibet
475.	–	Sial	Suwāl	caste (Newar)
476.	Siaprie	–	Shyābru	Rasuwa
477.	Sig Sig	–	Liglig	Gorkha
478.	Sikkem/Sookhim	Sikim	Sikkim	country
479.	–	Siklik/Seshant	Sikles	Kaski
480.	–	Sill	Silwāl	caste
481.	Siling	Siling/Sining	Sining	China
482.	Singhi Maligda	Siumli	Singmāri	mart, Sikkim
483.	–	Siramaur	Sirmoor	capital, Nahan
484.	Siremon	Sirmaur	Sirmoor	see above
485.	–	Siumli	Singmāri	see 482
486.	Soan-Kousi	Sankosi	Sunkosi	river
487.	Somoisir	–	Someswar	ridge, Chitawan
488.	Sona-Koate	–	Sunākoṭhi	Patan
489.	Soobhoo-tar	–	Raināstār	Lamjung
490.	Sookhim	–	Sikkim	see 478
491.	Soomaisee	–	Someswar	see 487
492.	Soophye	–	?	Bara
493.	Soorej-bunaik	–	Surya-bināyak	shrine
494.	Soorey-Koondah	–	Suryakund	lake, Gosainkund
495.	Soubah	–	Subbā	governor
496.	–	Soyeya	Sabhāyā	river, Majhkirant
497.	Subtuni/Subturri	Saptari	Saptari	
498.	Segouly	–	Sugauli	India
499.	Sugguntoal	–	Laganṭol	Kathmandu
500.	Sukti	–	Sakti	see 453
501.	Sulian-tar	–	Sallyāntār	Gorkha
502.	–	Sukhim	Sikkim	see 478

503.	Sumbhoo-nath	Sambhunath/ Sumbhoo-nath/ Swaymbhunath	Swayambhunāth	see 456
504.	Sumjoong	–	Lamjung	lordship
505.	Sumuri-bhunjan	–	Sāmri/bhanjyāṅ	Nawakot
506.	Sundooli	Sinduli	Siṅdhuli	see 464
507.	Sunghirja/Sunghya	–	Sirsiyā	stream, Parsa
508.	Sunkhmool	–	Sankhamul	Patan
509.	Surrung-Koat	Surrungkoat	Sarāṅkoṭ	fort, Kaski
510.	Sulti-Khul	–	Satikhel	Kathmandu
511.	Suttohoo/Luttohoo	Satahung	Satauñ	lordship
512.	Taistoon	–	Ṭiṣṭung	s. of Thankot
513.	–	Takam	Tākum	Parbat
514.	–	Taklakhar/	Taklākṭ	Tibet
515.	Tambeh-Kan	Tamrakhani	Tāmbakhāni	copper mine
516.	–	Tamber	Tamor	Pallo Kirant
517.	–	Tamlingtar	Ṭumlingtār	beside Arun
518.	–	Tamsen/Tansen	Tānsen	capital, Palpa
519.	Tannohi	–	Panauti	town
520.	–	Tariyani	Tarai	malarial plain
521.	–	Tarki	?	lordship
522.	–	Tasasudhun	Tāshichhod- zong	fort, Bhutan
523.	–	Tazi/Tadi	Tādi	river, Nawakot
524.	Teemi/Theeme	Timmi	Ṭhimi	Bhaktapur
525.	Teemul-beisi	–	Timālbeṇsi	Kabhre
526.	Teesta	Tista	Ṭṣṭā	river, Sikkim
527.	Teshoo Loomboo	–	Tāshilhungpo	Tibet
528.	–	Thakakuti	Ṭukche	Mustang
529.	Thaneh-choak	–	Thānchok	Nuwakot
530.	–	Thenikot	Ṭhini	Mustang
531.	Than-seen	–	Thansing	Nawakot
532.	–	Thibet	Tibet	country
533.	Thurgur	–	Tharghar	caste council
534.	–	Tibrisundari	Tripura-sundari	Jumla
535.	Tiburja/Temuria	–	Ṭimure	Rasuwa
536.	Tillijee/Tullijoo-mai	Tulsi Bhawani	Taleju	shrine, Kathmandu
537.	–	Timmi	Ṭhimi	Bhaktapur
538.	Tookeha	–	Ṭokhā	Kathmandu
539.	Toomlingtar	Tamlingtar	Ṭulingtār	beside Arun

540.	Toori Tooral	–	Tari	yam
541.	Toori	Ture	Tori	mustard
542.	Tul Singh	–	Talsing	land renter
543.	–	Tulasi Bhavani	Taleju	see 536
544.	Tullijoo-mai	Tulasi Bhawani	Taleju	see above
545.	tumhoor	Tamber	Tamor	river, Pallo Kirant
546.	Tumi	Timmi	Thimi	Bhaktapur
547.	Tumkoo	–	Thumko	hill prominence
548.	–	Tuppa Bandar	Tappā Bahadurā	estate, tarai
549.	Turryani/Turrye	Tarai/Tariyani	Tarai	malarial palin
550.	Ullown	–	?	fort, Parsa
551.	Ummirpore	–	Udayapur	fort
552.	–	Upardangg	Upardāng	fortress
553.	Urghaloor/Urgho	–	Arghā	lordship
554.	Wigha	–	Arghā	lordship
555.	Yullo-daisi	Yullo Daise	Yelā	Patan
556.	Yindaise	Yin Daise	Yiñ'	Kathmandu
557.	–	Yumila	Jumlā	lordship

THE MOIETY SYSTEM OF THE NEWARS

Gérard Toffin

Since thirty years ago, collaboration between anthropology and history has been urgently needed for the advancement of Nepalese studies. Anthropologists working in Nepal have started to pay more attention to documents from the past. They are not only interested in viewing their data in a diachronic perspective and in revisiting some of their basic concepts—such as caste, ethnic group, tribe, tradition— but also in reinterpreting ancient institutions or cultural processes in the light of anthropological thought and method (as I did in a recent book on the ideology of Malla kingship, Toffin 1993). Historians, meanwhile, although more committed by profession to the pressing problems of sources and chronology, are increasingly aware of the utility of studying contemporary traditional cultures and societies. This is not to say that the past reaches us unchanged; but in many fields (oral literature, mythology, toponymy, hydronymy, and even social institutions) the memory of ancient periods has undoubtedly been preserved up to the present day

Dhanavajra Vajracharya, the learned scholar we are commemorating in this volume and who contributed a great deal to the history of Nepal, would have, I am sure, agreed with this statement. However, attempts to blend anthropology and ancient history present inherent difficulties which cannot be overestimated. Each of the two disciplines favours its own explanations. Historians are usually attached to particular issues within a specific context or culture, whereas anthropologists are, in principle, concerned with a comparative approach and more general rules. This paper, devoted to models of structuring space and society in the traditional Kathmandu Valley, has been prepared with these questions in mind. Even if the data presented here are mainly ethnographic and deal mostly with the present situation, in my opinion they are of some relevance to the specialist of the past and to the philologist. How so and to what degree remain to be discussed.

Concentric and Diametrical Models in Newar Settlements

Recent works have stressed the existence of a concentric structure in the spatial design of the former Malla royal capitals of Kathmandu Valley, the

Newar heartland with a total Newar population of about half a million. This structure, based on a *mandala*, lit. "circle", or sacred diagram used in rituals, is linked with the caste system and with religious sites. Three points must be stressed in connection with this. Firstly, each Newar city has a set of eight protective goddesses around it, theoretically located in the eight cardinal directions and associated with cremation grounds. Together with the now-vanished city walls, this ritual boundary separates the inside from the outside. Secondly, the center of the ideal kingly city is occupied by a sacred site, a royal palace with a protective deity. As in the *mandala*, it is from this central point that everything (power, fertility, etc.) originates. Thirdly, as demonstrated by Kölver (1976), Gutschow (1982), and Pradhan (1986), a series of inner concentric circles marks degrees of closeness from the center. This design has direct implications on the repartition of castes, sets of gods and temples. Brahmins and high Hindu Shrestha castes, for instance, tend to be found around the royal palace, at a short distance from the temples of high-status deities represented by icons and only occasionally or indirectly blood-drinking. By contrast, the untouchables live mostly on the periphery of the town and are linked with *pith* shrines –immovable seats of power of blood-thirsty Matrika and Bhairava deities symbolized only by natural stones and served by low-ranking religious specialists. In some cases, the social status of the inhabitants is even expressed outside the settlement by the greater or lesser proximity (from the walls of the city) of cremation grounds. Though the present layout of the locality may not display so clear-cut a pattern of concentric zones for various historical reasons, the *mandala* concept is explicitly present everywhere. In this geographical configuration, spatial categories are given an explicit social and religious content. They mirror the hierarchy of caste and offer an ideal representation of ordered human society. Furthermore, they clearly illustrate the pattern of the pantheon, particularly the opposition between the vegetarian and the nonvegetarian deities.

But Newar settlements are also organised in accordance with a diametrical model. This second pattern, too neglected to my mind, divides the locality into two halves, expressed as "upper" and "lower", *thahne* (or *cvay*), and *kvahne* (or *kvay*) respectively in Newari. As I showed nearly two decades ago (Toffin 1979), this dichotomy applies not only to royal cities but to every Newar locality within the Kathmandu Valley. R. Levy (1990:169) reported local explanations for these two words. Thus, some people of Bhaktapur pretend that the upper part is "upper" because it is northerly. Other speculations are that it is upper because it is in the direction of the high Himalayas, in contrast to the progressively lower, that is, less elevated southern regions. According to still other persons, the upper half, *cvay*, was

the earliest part of the city settled, followed by a latter settlement, *kvay*, –a usage corresponding to the temporal terminology for ancestors (*cvay*, up), and descendants (*kvay*, down). But in reality, the upper and the lower sides of the locality are neither designated in relation to the elevation (though there is in most cases a slight difference in topography), nor to any cardinal point, nor to the settlement's history. They are related primarily to the flow of the adjoining river: everywhere, *cvay* means upstream, *kvay* downstream (Toffin 1979:69). This is why a totally flat settlement (such as the village of Pyangaon) can be divided into an "upper" and a "lower" part. This is also why the two halves can correspond to different directions depending on the site. In Kathmandu, for instance, where the nearby Visnumati river flows from the north to the south, the upper part corresponds to the north, the lower part to the south, whereas in most of the villages located in the south of Kathmandu Valley, where rivers flow from south to north, the opposite is true. Similarly, in Panauti, the upper part lies to the west, the lower part to the east, according to the two rivers merging at this locality. In Bhaktapur, it is the reverse.

The two models stand out in marked contrast. The first one (concentric), which presupposes a strong parallel between heaven and earth, macrocosm and microcosm, is a paradigm of the spatial organization of states, capitals and temples in much of South and South-East Asia. It has been symbolized in architectural and religious texts and has served as the plan of whole cities in India. The holy city of Benares, for instance, is explicitly laid out in this fashion. The diametrical model, conversely, has not been the subject of idealization in Indian tradition. "Nowhere in the manuals is it prescribed that cities should be composed of ritually opposed halves and nowhere do we find a standard for drawing the boundary," in the words of Hoek (1993:365). It seems quite specific to the Newar settlements and has no clear parallel among the other peoples of Nepal, except perhaps some speakers of Tibeto-Burman languages living in the hills. Besides, these two models imply two different social universes. In short, the concentric spatial design is consistent with a highly stratified structure, here a caste hierarchy, whereas the diametrical model suggests an egalitarian society based on a spirit of reciprocity.

It is my contention in this paper that the binary division of Newar settlements is of crucial importance for the understanding of the old civilization of the Kathmandu Valley and has not yet been studied with sufficient attention. To put it briefly, this salient feature is not restricted to the religious sphere as has been affirmed on the basis of fragmentary material; it also concerns, at least in some cases, the social structure. The diametrical model is thus a moiety system in the full anthropological sense

of the term, that is : a dual pattern of deep socio-religious significance, recurring all over the world, especially in traditional and archaic cultures. As such, it requires a detailed analysis and a specific elucidation. The ethnographic data presented here were collected over a long period of time, between 1970 and 1994, principally in Theco village and in Kathmandu city, my two main examples, but also within many other Newar settlements of Kathmandu Valley.

Newar moieties and ceremonial activities

Let us begin with the religious aspects. As noted by various authors, the principal functions of these territorial moieties are ceremonial and pertain to the sacred realm. In most cases, especially in the urban areas, each side has its own tutelary gods, its separate festivals and its particular cremation grounds for its dead bodies. In Kathmandu for instance, Pacali Bhairava and Lumari Ajima (= Bhadrakali), two local deities of crucial importance, are clearly associated with the lower part of the city, whereas Luti Ajima (= Indrayani) and Neta Ajima (= Nardevi) are linked with the upper town. Similarly, the Jyapu farmers from *kvahne* burn their corpses in Teku, on the banks of the Bagmati, near Pacali Bhairava temple, whereas the ones from *thahne*, or the high town, carry out their cremations mainly near the temple of Luti Ajima, in some cases at the Kanga Ajima (= Kankeshvari) place. Such ritual performances provide the inhabitants of the respective moieties with a sense of identity and separateness.

The division into two halves is emphasized during the numerous processions of deities at the time of festivals. For example, during the Indra jatra of Kathmandu, the festival of Lord Indra, the living goddess Kumari is taken in her huge chariot along an established procession route. The first day, she moves into the southern half of the town; the next day she makes a round in the northern half. In all quarters, large crowds, especially of women, wait to greet the goddess. Through these processions, the royal Kumari, embodiment of Taleju, the deity of the Malla kings and chief protectress of the State, extends her power over the two components of the capital and reaffirms the unity of the kingdom.

During the same spectacular festival, another procession, headed by a Jyapu man impersonating Dagi (or Dakini), a demoness identified as the mother of Indra, starts from Kasthamandap in the center of the capital and follows the Kumari route, first in the lower part of the city, then in the upper part. The procession is made up of recently bereaved Buddhist families. The story behind this custom comes from the Nepalese legend of Indra jatra (Toffin 1992). In return for the release of her son, captured by the inhabitants of Kathmandu, the mother of the king of the gods promises to

take the souls of those who died in that year straight to heaven to be reunited with their families. The souls of the dead had to cling together in a row behind Indra's mother. However, the line broke up some miles west of Kathmandu at the site of the lake and the souls fell to earth. It is in memory of these lost souls, and to assure a better fate for the dead persons of the past year, that families follow the path of Dagi (Toffin 1992 : 85). As usual in important Kathmandu festivals, the procession is headed by a *dhimay* drum band and a young man carrying a swinging pole decorated with yak-tails from Jyapu peasant caste.

The moiety system manifests itself with special strength during the royal rituals performed within or around the ancient Malla palaces. For reasons which still remain to be explained, this is especially the case in Kathmandu city (1). The palace compound of Hanuman Dhoka, located approximately in the center of this locality, lies on the border line between the two moieties. The local people contend that the lion defending the left side of Taleju temple (within the palace) falls in the high town, the one guarding the right side in the low town. During Dasain (New. : Mvahn), the most important religious event of the Nepalese yearly cycle, the Kshatriya festival exalting the power of the king, a peculiar dance is staged in Hanuman Dhoka. Two dancers, impersonating Daitya and Kumar, participate in it, accompanied by their respective music bands. They are boys between 8 and 15 years old, with unmasked faces. It is said that these two living gods protect the goddess Taleju Bhavani, the central *shakti* of the realm, from dangers that may threaten her. As a matter of fact, the dance occurs when four processional images of the royal goddess are taken down from Taleju temple to a room where she is worshipped in secret and again when she is brought back to her sanctum three days latter. The Kumar has to protect Taleju from dancers originating in heaven, and is equipped for this with a bow and arrow. The Daitya has to protect the goddess from dangers on earth and from the nether regions, and is equipped with a dagger. Now, interestingly enough, Daitya has to belong to the Shakya (goldsmith) community of the lower town, Kumar to the Tuladhar merchant community of the upper town. These divine guardians protecting the state deity obviously recall the two deified children, Bhairava and Ganesh, who precede Kumari in her chariot procession during Indra jatra. In this case likewise the protective function is explicit. B. van den Hoek and B. Shrestha who have described at length and analysed this ritual and dance in a recent article (1992b), put emphasis on the opposition between Daitya, a demon, and Kumar, the god of war. They see in this dance the persistence of old Vedic ideas preserved through the ages and interpret it as a "sacrifice of war", following the theory of J.-C. Heesterman, the eminent Indologist, specialist

of Vedic rituals. It seems to me simpler and more accurate to interpret the occurrence of the two halves in this ceremonial context as a way of insisting on the central position of the king and his personal goddess Taleju in the city. What is stressed here is the king as the sustainer of the realm, the power that upholds the universe, the key figure transcending all oppositions around him. It should be noted in passing that this dance is said to have existed during the medieval period in the other Malla capitals as well. But they were abolished by Prithivi Narayan Shah after the conquest, and restored in Kathmandu by his son, Pratap Singh (van den Hoek & Shrestha 1992b: 217) (2). If there is some truth in these statements, the Daitya/Kumar dance would have been an important religious element of the Malla kingship overall.

Still in Kathmandu, the ritual dichotomy of the city appears not only when gods and goddesses are celebrated, but also at the time when demons and malignant forces are expelled. Thus, once a year, on the second and third day of the bright fortnight of Baisakh (April-May), the Jyapu farmers of Kathmandu offer cooked rice to the evil spirits, *but-pret*. The rice is taken in a procession all round the city and is thrown (New. : *bau biye*) on the crossroads. The purpose of this ritual is to feed the demons, to invite them to a feast, so that they will not be tempted to steal children and grain from the houses. Now, it is worth noticing that the Jyapu from the upper town have to gather in Lagan on the first day of the ritual. On the second day, it is the turn of the quarters from the lower part to meet up at this same place. As in the Kumari/Daitya dance of Dasain festival, both the fundamental dualism and the internal integration of the spatial components of the city are expressed in this ritual. By and large, these public ceremonies periodically recall the divide and actualize it through ceremonial devices.

Ritual battles

The dichotomy of the settlement is frequently enacted in a conflicting fashion during festivals. As has been reported in many ethnographic sources, the upper and the lower town of Bhaktapur oppose each other in competition during the main festival of the locality, the Bisket jatra, which occurs at the beginning of the solar New year. The struggle is focused on the huge chariot of Bhairava positioned near Taumadhi square. Each group tries to pull the chariot with ropes into their sides of the city. "The inhabitants of the upper part of the town vie with those from the lower in a hair-raising tug-of-war, each side straining with all their might at ropes tied fore and aft, while swarming mobs of celebrators cheer and shout in their midst. Swaying and bouncing precariously, the towering chariot is yanked this way and that until one team finally succeeds in moving it in their

direction" (M. Anderson 1974 : 44). To pull Bhairava into their part ensures that the townsmen will have good fortune during the coming year, as the presence of the chariot is considered to represent a *darshana*, a manifestation or "showing himself" of the deity Bhairava to that half of the city (R. Levy 1990 : 472). Similarly, in the small town of Panauti, eastward from Bhaktapur, a ritual contest happens every year on the last day of Dasain, the autumnal festival dedicated to the Goddess. On that day, considered in classical India as auspicious for new military expeditions, people from the two halves of the city fight each other near an old fort, on the eastern part of the locality, by throwing pumpkins (Toffin 1984 : 537). This tug of war is locally called *larain mhitegu*, literally : "play of war".

Other ritualized battles, much more violent, formerly took place in Kathmandu city during the yearly Sithi Nakha festival, in May-June. At that time, severe struggles occurred between the northern (upper) part and the southern (lower) part of the capital, in the bed of the Visnumati river, east of the city. In his account of the kingdom of Nepal, at the turn of the nineteenth century, Hamilton, though not being an eye-witness himself, reports this battle in the following manner : "About the end of May, and beginning of June, for fifteen days, a skirmish takes place between the young men and boys, of the north and south ends of the city. During the first fourteen days, it is chiefly confined to the boys or the lads; but on the evening of the fifteenth day it becomes more serious. The opposing parties are drawn up in the broad, level, sandy bed of the river, which runs between the city and Svayambhunath. In the rear of each is a rising ground, which prevents either party from being hard pushed (...). The fight begins about an hour before sunset, and continues until darkness separate the combatants. In the one which we saw, four people were carried off much wounded, and almost every other year one or two men are killed : yet the combat is not instigated by hatred, nor do the accidents that happen occasion any rancour. Formerly, however, a most cruel practice existed. If any unfortunate fellow was taken prisoner, he was immediately dragged to the top of a particular eminence in the rear of his conquerors, who put him to death with buffalo bones. In remembrance of this custom, the bones are still brought to the field, but the barbarous use of them has for many years been abolished. The prisoners are now kept until the end of the combat, are carried home in triumph by the victors, and confined until morning, when they are liberated" (Hamilton 1819 : 43-44).

This macabre custom obviously has a connotation of human sacrifice. As a matter of fact, when the fight still existed, it was the tradition to sacrifice any prisoners that either side succeeded in capturing. The people from the upper part used to sacrifice their prisoners to Luti Ajima (= Indrayani)

goddess, the one from the lower part to Kanga Ajima (= Kankeshwari), two of the eight female deities of the *mandala* (Toffin 1993 : 201). Hamilton's description suggests that the very act of making a victim was central to the battle -which should not surprise us if we consider that Kathmandu Valley hosts numerous wild goddesses who can be appeased only with human sacrifice. As correctly noted by Bert van den Hoek (1993 : 371), a ritual battle such as the one of the Sithi Nakha might have been an appropriate way to select a suitable victim and nourish the two local goddesses with human blood.

Yet, the location of these two deities in the city raises a problem. Luti Ajima clearly belongs to the upper town, but Kanga Ajima has no direct connection with the lower part of the city. It is true that the festival of the latter goddess is linked with Lumari Ajima (= Bhadrakali), an emblem of the south of Kathmandu, but her temple is built in the central part of the city (see below) and is more related to the inhabitants of this part than to those of the lower town. One has the feeling that Kanga Ajima has been chosen as a sacrificial place during Sithi Nakha festival just because of its proximity to the battlefield. It should be admitted on the other hand that a great deal of rivalry opposed the two halves of the capital in the ritual sphere. For instance, Luti Ajima (upper town) and Lumari Ajima (lower town) are conceived as fundamentally antagonist. A legend relates that Luti Ajima was invited to a feast by her elder sister (= Lumari Ajima), but one day late, so that only left-overs were available for her and her hungry children. The anger of Luti Ajima at the insult from her sister could be placated only with a serpent sacrifice, *serpabali*. This ritual is still offered to Luti Ajima every year during the Bal *cahray* festival, on the new moon of Mansir (November-December).

Hamilton (1819 : 45) mentioned two explanations for the Sithi Nakha battle of stones : "Some allege, that at one time Kathmandu was subject to two Rajas, and that the skirmishings first arose among their respective followers, and have ever since been continued. Others, with more probability, think that the combat is meant to commemorate a battle between a son of Maha Deva, and a Rakshas, or a evil spirit. Colonel Crawford justly gives a preference to this opinion, for, if one of the parties obtain a victory, everything favourable, seasonable rains, plentiful crops, and fine weather, is augured for the remainder of the year; the reverse is expected should the opposite party gain an advantage".

According to R. Levy (1990 : 473), the ritually organized fights between the upper and lower city served "to deflect antagonisms from within small areas, particularly between the groups of economically and socially interrelated *thars* in such areas, antagonisms whose overt manifestations

would have been considerably more serious in their consequences". In other words, ritual battles would have been organized to transform pure violence into a religious act and to resolve potential conflicts between the two parts of the settlement. This functionalist perspective, however, is not wholly satisfactory. The Newars contests described above cannot be reduced to a domestication of wild impulses. More profoundly, they create a strong relationships between the moieties. Take the sacrifices of Sithi Nakha for instance. They can be considered as an exchange of dead persons between the two parties, as important as exchange of wives through marriage. As such, they generate a positive social bond; a bond renewed every year on a stated day.

An other point should be made. As in many parts of the world where ritual battles take place between two well delimited moieties, Newar fights occur at some critical moments of transition of the year. This is obviously the case of the Bisket jatra, performed at the end of the yearly cycle. But the Sithi Nakha, held on the sixth of Jeth (May-June), bright fortnight, is also a crucial date of the calendar. On the one hand, this festival marks the completion of house construction and the concluding day of the cult of lineage deities (Digudiyah). On the other hand, it inaugurates the period of rice cultivation. Newar peasants name it : "the festival of the married daughters", *mhyay maca*", because Sithi Nakha ushers in a season where the house will be empty of all its members, busy in the fields, as it is when daughters leave their paternal house at the time of marriage. It is probably one of the reason why, from Sithi Nakha onwards, no musical instruments may be played for two months. Nowhere it is said that each Newar moiety represents a season of the year as is the case in some parts of the world. But these battles are conspicuous for their attempt to restore a primordial chaos, the confusion of origins, followed by a recreation and a return to a reanimated cosmic order flooding across structural boundaries. Every opposition is then overcome or transcended in a recovered unity. Such periodic oscillation between chaos and order, death and life is a salient feature of the Newar cycle of festivals.

Moreover, it seems that the reactivation of the moieties goes together with a stimulation of fecundity. The very act of giving blood to goddesses at the time of Sithi Nakha appears as a way to fertilize the soil, to fecundate the fields before sowing rice. May it not also be a device to invoke rain at a time when the waters are at their lowest level all over the kingdom? It is surely not by mere chance that the battle of stones takes place in the bed of a dry river (the river which in fact serves as the basis of the Kathmandu moieties in terms of orientation). Similarly, it should be recalled that Sithi Nakha is said to have been instituted by Gunakamadeva, the legendary

founder of Kathmandu, "in response to a command of the war god Kartikeya" (Slusser 1982 : 329). Interestingly, the festival, which possesses many simultaneous meanings, commemorates the birth of this god. What is stressed here is a correlation with kingship and, more particularly, with war. As a matter of fact, it is a hypothesis worth considering that the ritual confrontation of Sithi Nakha formerly had something to do with military activities. It is consistent, in any case, with the warfare prevailing during the medieval period in the Kathmandu Valley, that is : local skirmishes between contiguous small kingdoms, consanguineously and affinally related, small fights taking place within a close space, with few actions outside the Valley.

Dualism or trialism?

Before proceeding further in this analysis, one specific problem should be dealt with. In a few cases, Newar settlements are not divided into two but into three parts : the upper, the lower, and the middle part, *dathu* in Newari, mediating between the two. In the old Kathmandu city for instance, the middle town covers a large portion of the locality, from the Asan tol cross-roads in the north-east, to the royal palace in the south. Towards the east and the west, this central territory extends to the former walls of the locality. The border between the high and low city is said to be fixed by a small image of a fish set into the pavement of the square in Asan tol. This tripartite structure of Kathmandu is well established in the spatial fabric of the city. Each segment thus has its distinctive fountain (*hiti*) : Kohiti in the southern town, Thahiti in the northern town, and Maruhiti in the middle. To this day, the first two names refer to quarters (New. : *tvah*) belonging respectively to the southern and the northern side of the capital. It is also worth mentioning that on the fourth day of Asvin (September-October), black fortnight, towards the end of the Indra jatra festival, the living goddess Kumari has to be taken in her chariot around this central part of Kathmandu, after the two first processions in *kvahne* and *thahne* (see above). It is popularly believed that this is an extra day, *nanica jatra*, added by king Jaya Prakash Malla to enable one of his concubines living in this quarter (Kilagal) to see the goddess. Other reasons unknown to us perhaps came into play. Besides this, the thirty-two quarters of Kathmandu farmers were traditionally distributed between the three parts of Kathmandu : they were respectively classified in Kva *tvah*, Thah *tvah* and Dathu *tvah* (Toffin 1994 : 450-451). Yet, over the years, this triadic structure has been forgotten in favour of the present bipartition. *Dathu* is presently restricted to the Hanuman Dhoka royal palace and to the attached quarter of Maru which to this day belongs neither to the upper nor to the lower half of Kathmandu.

We may speculate that this structure originated from the historical development of Kathmandu city. But with our present information, it is difficult to explain why this trivalent configuration is so conspicuously absent in the two other Malla capitals, Bhaktapur and Patan, which are laid out according to a strictly dual division. We will come back to this point in the concluding part of this paper.

I know two other cases of tripartition in Kathmandu Valley and its surrounds. The first one is the Jyapu peasant village of Manmai ju, 5 km north from Kathmandu, a village influenced in many ways by the social and religious institutions of farmers living in the present capital of Nepal. In Manmai ju, the upper, the lower, and the middle part of the settlement correspond to three different quarters (*tvah*) and seem to play an important role in the social structure of the village. The second case is Sikharpa, a Pahari settlement located on a small ridge over Lele, in Lalitpur district. Although Pahari basket-makers are somewhat distinct from Newars and speak a separate language, their culture and society are mainly borrowed from the autochthonous population of the Kathmandu Valley. Now, in a similar manner, this locality is split into three parts : low, middle and high (in Pahari respectively : *kva*, *daria*, *tha*), each related to a separate death society (New. *si guthi*, Pah. : *pule gu*). Membership in these funeral associations is usually inherited patrilineally and normally remain unchanged even if the family moves from one part of the village to an other (Toffin, in press). Further research, especially in the historical field, is needed to account for these forms of village trialism.

Moieties as social groupings : the case of Theco

So much for the ceremonial aspects of the moieties. Now, I want to show that besides this religious background, the Newar binary opposition under discussion also concerns social institutions. It must be admitted that moieties are never exogamous nor endogamous in Newar society, and that they do not correspond to any significant repartition of caste. Yet they are of considerable importance in many other fields. I shall focus first on the village of Theco, located 7 km south of Patan, in Lalitpur district. In this settlement, the moiety system pervades the whole social organization (3).

Theco (about 4000 inhabitants in 1991) is a dense village inhabited mainly by Jyapu farmers (more than 500 households) and a small minority of Gathu gardeners (120 households). Its two parts : "up", *cvay*, and "low", *kvay*, correspond to the nearby Nakhu river which flows from south to north, in a parallel direction in the village. In daily life, the two parts of the community are referred by the word *bade*, "half-settlement". The border is marked by a small *caitya* in the center of the village. Interestingly, each side

is related to a peculiar goddess : "up" with Balkumari, "low" with Brahmayani. These local goddesses, two of the eight Matrikas, each have a separate temple in their respective territory. Their rule over their half and are responsible for its fertility and the welfare of its inhabitants, just as the royal goddess, in conjunction with the state deity (Pasupatinath), protects her kingdom. Although Balkumari is thought to be the elder sister of Brahmayani, there is no status precedence of one part of the locality over the other one. These two Matrikas are the spiritual protectresses and the main deities of the village. In addition, each half has its own Ganesha and Nasahdyah, two fundamental territorial deities usually attached to spatial subdivisions of some importance. Furthermore, the lower part of the village has a Navadurga house-god served by Gathu people and the upper part possesses a Bhairava temple.

To understand the moiety system of Theco, the main elements of the locality's internal organization should be briefly described. As in most Jyapu villages of Kathmandu Valley, death societies, locally called *sanah gu* (or *murda guthi*), are at the basis of Theco social life. The population is divided into seven cohesive *gu* (for *guthi*), six for the Jyapus and a separate one for the Gathus. Four of them fall into the upper part of Theco, three in the lower part. As usual in Newar society, these death *guthi* profess religious and charitable goals, aiding families who are in financial difficulties, attending the funerals of their members and ensuring cremation. In all these respects, they closely parallel the French fraternities (*confréries*), now on the wane. Each association has its own common house, *guthi che*, where collective feasts are held during the full-moon of Mansir (November-December), Thila *punhi*. Affiliation is compulsory and is an ascriptive component of an individual : every adult man from the village must belong to one of these seven groups. What is more, unlike in most of the funeral associations operating in urban settlements, membership is strictly hereditary from father to son : a Jyapu will remain affiliated to his death group until he passes away, without any possibility of moving to another one. To belong simultaneously to two *sanah gu* is prohibited.

The elders of the association, *thakali*, are the key figures of the village and the conservators of traditional usage. They have ceremonial privileges such as to be served first at feasts and to wear white turbans on ritual occasions. These elders are also in a position to expel any person who had sexual relations with women from impure castes or married a non-Jyapu girl. To be excluded from one's *sanah gu* is to be excluded from one's lineage and one's caste. The social and religious status of the excommunicated person will be deeply affected. No other associations will accept him in the village. Death societies are thus essential for the proper integration of individuals

into the community and are a way to enforce caste regulations. Notably enough, they are not exogamous and do not function as unity of marriage.

Nowadays, *sanah gu* groupings do not own any land to cover the cost of their annual feast and other small expenses. They rely on contributions from their members, partly in cash, partly in grain. It should be noted that in 1975, one among the seven associations was running an oil-press and used its profit to pay the expenses. The yearly feast, which is the great affair of the group, is organized by a "turn-holder", *pahlah mha*, which changes every year. The responsibilities are handed over at a special meeting on the last day of the feast, after checking the accounts and valuables in the presence of the seniors. In the lower part of the village, dead persons are burnt by the members of the grouping whose turn it is. In the upper part, cremation is ensured by a fixed number of Jyapu specialists named *gván* in Newari. These persons belong to two distinct sub-groups called respectively the "Yellow Face" and the "Red Face". In some cases, each *gu* is divided among four sections, grounded on an age-set structure : *jetha puin*, *mahila puin*, *sahila puin*, *kancha puin*. This system of division helps to rotate charges and duties such as bringing wood and carrying the bier, among group members. At the time of funerals, all the membership mourn for a short period of time to express their sympathy towards the bereaved family.

The annual feast of the death society involves many ritual activities and is imbued with religious significance. It is focused on a deity called Sidyah, represented by a small pot vested with strong magical power or a mysterious piece of wood. In normal times, this icon is kept by members of the grouping in turn. But during the feast, it is carried in procession by the second most senior member, *nvaku*, of the association, and exhibited for three days in a hut made of bamboo stripes and straw temporarily constructed inside the *guthi*-house. Sidyah presides over the ceremonial meals taken together in that place and is worshipped with blood-sacrifices. He is associated with another deity, always carried along with him, called Agnidyah. This god is symbolized by a pot filled with burning incense and is carried by the second most senior member of the grouping. A third emblem of tremendous importance for the death *guthi* is honoured during the festive event : it consists of an orange shroud (*devan*) used to cover the corpse at funerals. In most of the cases, this is thought to be an embodiment of Bhairava and is held in great awe. Each *gu* has its own gods and set of sacred symbols.

Outsiders cannot attend these feasts and are not permitted to watch the proceedings. *Sanah gu* meetings and ritual procedures are the business only of those who are members; others are physically debarred by erecting a screen or defending the entrance of the *guthi*-house. The death group is

hence much more than a way of earning religious merit or an association formed simply for charitable purposes. It is a secret society, impregnated with sacramental values, which contributes to defining a sense of mystical community (4). For instance, one of the most important moments of the Thila *punhi* feast is the *si ka bhvay* ritual during which the head of a sacrificed buffalo or goat is divided up, the different parts going in order to the eight most senior members. Given the spiritual values attached to the head of the body (honour, spirit, sacredness) in Newar and Nepalese society, such a sharing has a crucial significance beyond mundane issues. As a matter of fact, the affinity felt for those one can actually see performing the same rituals as oneself during Thila *punhi* full-moon, and with whom one periodically joins in the execution of other rites, is extremely strong.

Women are excluded from these ceremonial gatherings and are not allowed to come into contact with the gods identifying the association. The only exception concerns the wife of the "turn-holder" who is in charge of preparing items for worship, cooking and serving food, as well as worshipping the elders with flowers and rice during Thila *punhi*. Indeed, women are not formally affiliated to death societies. Nonetheless, such grouping organize the funerals and the cremation of the wives and the unmarried daughters of their members. Young men, *kvakali*, are also kept off from *sanah gu*. As a rule, to be a full member, one has to establish a separate household, that means separate from the father's estate. For women and junior men, the *sanah gu* is a virtually secret order within the village society.

Funeral societies are not only concerned with death and social control. There are also dedicated to the worship of the two main goddesses of the settlement : Balkumari and Brahmayani. As such, they back the binary division of Theco and play a dominant part in the religious life of the whole community. In what manner? Let us take the upper half of the village. Each death group attached to this moiety has separate duties towards Balkumari. The *carhay gu* offers cooked rice to the goddess every month on the eve of the new-moon (*carhay*). The *punhi gu* offers rice-beer on every full-moon day. The *pare gu* presents rice, vermilion paste, incense and flowers on the first day of the lunar month (*pare*). As for the *ta gu*, it has the responsibility of the cult of the Bhairava situated in the upper part of the village. The charges of watching over the temple, guarding the statues, cleaning the roofs, rotate among the membership according to the age-set *puin* sections described above. It is estimated that within each moiety of Theco every inhabitant will bear this charge (*puin pahlah*) at least once in his life.

But this is not the whole story. The *sanah gu* composing each moiety of Theco merge within an enlarged association to ensure the various ritual

performances of the goddesses they are attached to. The three death societies of the lower part form the Brahmayani *guthi*, the four groupings of the upper part constitute the Balkumari *guthi*. These two expanded associations are funded by rice-fields, held as *raj guthi* and registered in the Guthi Corporation. In 1975, these lands were cultivated by tenants from Theco and neighbouring villages. Each *guthi* was getting about 50 *muri* of paddy (about 2450 kg) from it, of which part was sold in Patan, and part was used to prepare beer and beaten rice for feasts. Furthermore, each *guthi* owns a common house (*guthi che*) near the temple of its goddess. This house belongs collectively to the corresponding half of the community. To run such estates, the two concerned associations have generated a complex hierarchical structure. The Brahmayani *guthi* for instance is headed by a body of twenty-one notables called *thakali*, which include : the five seniormost members of the association, six cooks (*bhali*), six accountants (*majho* or *kalindar*), and six watchmen (*pahlah*). Some of these functions rotate among the membership, others are permanent. These twenty-one persons are fed more than twelve times a year with great abundance of food and beer.

The point to be noted is the following : Brahmayani and Balkumari *guthi*, that is the two moieties of the village, have to do not only with individual piety. They are primarily the expression of compulsory territorial and social bonds encompassing the whole village structure. They bring together the main components of the community and provide a formal arena for social and religious activities. Among Jyapu farmers as among many other Newar castes, religion is individualistic to a minimum : it is deeply embedded in the overall social framework.

The festivals of Balkumari and Brahmayani are both held at the same time as the feast of the death societies : between the end of the (lunar) month of Mansir and the beginning of Pus. This is the main calendrical event (*de-jatra* or *mu-jatra*) of the year. On the first day of the festival, the statues of the two goddesses are carried to their common *pitha* (New. : *pigan*), a sacred place outside the village proper, towards the south. A Hindu Tantric priest comes at night from the neighbouring townlet of Chapagaon to perform a fire-sacrifice in front of the two assembled deities. Next morning, Balkumari and Brahmayani are taken back to the village and carried through the streets of their respective moieties in separate palanquins. From that day onward, the Navadurga dance is also enacted by Gathu people.

To sum up, funeral associations have multifarious functions embracing many fields of the religious life. More particularly, they establish a connection between death and the cult of local divinities. Each male inhabitant of Theco is thus simultaneously bound to a *sanah gu* and to a

territorial goddess. In my opinion, this link is a marked characteristic of Newar social structure. To explain it sociologically in terms of social functions is not enough. The system itself is sustained by sacred values, a whole set of symbolic representations, which are to be interpreted from an indigenous point of view and need more research in the future.

What then of the kinship groups? The *sanah gu* association does not coincide with a clan or a maximal lineage, but is made up of small patrilineages called *kavan* or *bhu*. These descent groups comprise from four to eight families, the members of which consider themselves as *phuki*, i.e. agnatically related, and often live in close proximity. All of them are ritually polluted if a death occurs within each other's families. The lineage represents the basic exogamous group and worships a common deity, Digudyah, whose site is located at the periphery of the settlement, once a year. In Theco, this ceremony is the major occasion for demonstrating the solidarity of the group overtly. It is performed on the twelfth day of Magh (January-February), bright fortnight. Furthermore, kinsmen belonging to one lineage unite for the performance of major rites of passage for *phuki*-members.

Although the affiliation to a death society is hereditary, its members cannot trace their descent to a common ancestor. Consequently, lineages composing a funeral group do not feel any kinship ties, with the exception of a few cases. It must be recalled in this respect that descent units in Newar society are characterized by their shallowness. Beyond the fourth or the fifth generation, kinship disappears and the ban on marriage becomes obsolete, even in agnatical line. The death societies of Theco probably grew from a small number of related lineages, but nowadays these ties have been forgotten. Only *guthi* groups and the territorial dichotomy of the settlement remain. Evidently, the present internal organization of Theco rests more on territorial ties than on consanguinity.

Conclusions

The illustrative case of Theco should not be considered as totally exceptional. As I showed elsewhere (Toffin 1994), the Jyapu peasants of old Kathmandu city are also divided according to the dualistic structure of the city. Within this local caste group, the basic social units are not death societies, but musical associations called *dhimay guthi* focusing on a special drum, *dhimay*, thought by the Jyapus to be one of their oldest musical instrument and considered as the embodiment of the god of music. These groupings, which coincide with an old division of Kathmandu into 32 quarters, *tvah*, are exogamous and hereditary. No change of affiliation is possible, even after a move to another part of the city. Here again the

territorial moieties correspond to social units, vesting rights and imposing duties on individuals. From the structural point of view, the principles that serve to organize the village of Theco are to a large extent the same as those which are applied in the urban system of Kathmandu city. The only difference is that in one case it is death that is prevalent, and in the other it is divine music. Doubtless, these meaningful variants can be seen as transformations within a common structure. In both systems, it is thus the territorial ties that determine social relationships, rather than kinship.

It is now clear that the moiety system of the Newars does not pertain only to religion and cannot be explained entirely in term of a sacrificial "concourse" (5). It is a sociological divide, an essential part of the fabric of Newar society. How can it be explained? One could first set forth historical reasons. It could reasonably be assumed that the territorial moieties of Newar settlements are at bottom a historical construct and have to do with the genesis of these localities. Very little can be learned from the past of Theco, but documents from Kathmandu are more abundant. In fact the present capital of Nepal seems to have been formed from the coalescence of several separate settlements. As Dhanavajra Vajracharya stated from the testimony of inscriptional data (1987 : 360), this city was divided in early mediaeval times into two parts : Koligrama (the area north of Hanuman Dhoka palace) and Dakshinakoligrama (the area south of Hanuman Dhoka), corresponding more or less to the two present-day halves of the city. With the waning of the Licchavis and their high Sanskrit culture the local names for these two settlements came into prominence. Koligrama and Dakshinakoligrama would have then merged progressively in the course of history. Similarly, the tripartite pattern of Kathmandu could have originated from an old structure. According to J.K. Locke (1986 : 254), the three original parts of the city were : Survarnapranali/Yambu (upper city), Kantipur (middle city) and Kastamandap/Yangal (low city). Still now, the lower part of Kathmandu -the former Yangal- forms a socially and religiously separate entity (Toffin 1994).

It is worth mentioning in this respect that each side of Kathmandu has been associated up to now with a particular group of Thakujuru (Malla), descendants of the former twelve Vaishya Thakuri *raja* who ruled the capital until Ratna Malla (XIV century). The high city is connected with the Thakujuru of Thahiti, the low city with the Thakujuru of Kohiti. These two groups do not possess any political power and have no connection with the present king of Nepal. But as convincingly shown by Bert van den Hoek (1993 : 360-361), they still fulfil a ritual role, as lords of sacrifice, in some festivals of the locality. For instance, the Thakujuru of the upper part are the main patrons of Indrayani festival, during Bala *cahray* (November-

December), one of the main calendrical events on that side of the capital. Similarly, the Thakujuju of the lower part preside over the yearly festival of Pacali Bhairava and the fire-sacrifice which precedes the procession of this deity, one of the most crucial divine figures of south Kathmandu. It is even said that the two doors of the temple of Taleju, in the center of the locality, are respectively under the protection of these two groups : the left door being associated with the low city, the right with the high city. However, it should be remarked that there are many other rituals and temples in the town in which the Thakujuju have no special functions.

The dichotomy of Newar settlements can also be ascribed to the *dvairajya* (lit. : sovereignty of two) double kingdom which was favoured in the Kathmandu Valley during much of its ancient and mediaeval history (Toffin 1984 : 201-204). Let us recall that in this system, two brothers, or a son and his father, or a nephew and his maternal uncle, were ruling over one half of the kingdom, which was still formally considered as a whole (6). In general, a precedence of seniority existed between the half-kingdoms. The point to be noted is that this co-rulership operated not only on the level of the Kathmandu Valley, each king ruling in one separate capital, but also within a single city, divided into two parts. The Padmagiri chronicle for instance holds that Svarna Malla, son of Raya Malla (1482-1505) divided the villages of Thimi, Nakdes, Bode, Sankhu and Changu, into two parts, giving one half of each to his brother, and himself ruling the other half (Hasrat 1970 : 58). S.B. Gnyawali (1972 : 114-120) mentions on his side that under the reign of Prana Malla, more precisely between 1524 and 1534, the city of Bhaktapur was split into two moieties headed by a king on each side. Besides, it should be kept in mind that, according to a tradition, Kathmandu was once ruled by two different kings and that such a divide accounts for the stone festivals of Sithi Nakha (Hamilton 1819 : 45). Similar statements are sometimes made for other villages, e.g. Satungal (Ishii 1978 : 513). Though there are great gaps in our knowledge of this ancient political institution, it seems reasonable at first sight to link it with the present moieties of Newar settlements. Admittedly, these moieties no longer have any political function, but this may formerly have been the case. Without falling into the old cliché about the timelessness of traditional societies, anthropologists have correctly demonstrated that rituals are much more conservative than other spheres of social life and may retain ancient elements for a very long time.

However, this historical explanation does not resolve the whole problem. Firstly, such a hypothesis would imply that almost every Newar town came into being as a result of two separate entities fusing together -which is unlikely. Secondly, it leaves unanswered the question of the survival of the

ritual and the social divide long after the collapse of its supposed corresponding political structure. Are the moieties really vestiges of the past? One cannot eliminate the possibility of a later construct, perhaps originating during the period of political fragmentation of the Malla age, and mandating a historical method of study. Thirdly, Newar moieties belong to a type of institution found all over the world. Ritual battles in particular are frequent phenomena in such systems. This wider perspective is deserving a comparative research of its own. Consequently, the history of ancient Nepal can take us only part of the way towards determining the exact nature of the Newar moiety system. A sociological and anthropological perspective is required for a full account of this subject.

To return to a point raised at the beginning of this article, the moieties of the Newars obviously fall outside Indian realities. Although the *dvairajya* system is described in the Arthashastra, it has never been implemented on a large scale throughout the subcontinent. Furthermore, the diametrical model on which Newar dualism is based is alien to the caste system and to hierarchy. It postulates a basic egalitarianism and could, theoretically, even subsist without any king at its center. The moieties of the Kathmandu Valley could more appropriately be compared with those hill populations of Nepal who speak Tibeto-Burman languages, such as Tamang, Gurung, Rai, Limbu, etc. Indeed, the vertical dimension is a crucial feature of the society and the culture of these groups and is a vital element of their symbolism. Nick Allen (1972 : 81-82) has aptly shown that the opposition of up and down is deeply rooted in Thulung Rai language, to the extent of being part of its grammatical inflections. Similarly, the upstream/downstream dichotomy is one of the most important spatial opposition of Tibet-Burman groups, whose houses are often built and their rituals performed in accordance with it. Doubtless, the moieties of the Kathmandu Valley -among the most original traits of Newar society- are much more akin with other Nepalese tribes than with classical India.

A connection with the Tibeto-Burman heritage would explain the very puzzling presence of so central an up/down opposition in a plain region such as the Kathmandu Valley. Such a connection is tempting not only because Newari belongs to this group of languages. The Newar social organization itself, at the level of its internal structures, displays some segmentary features resembling those of the vernacular hill tribes, and Newar kinship terminology is, at least partly, consistent with cross-cousin marriage, a prescriptive alliance frequently associated with moieties in other societies (Toffin 1984). Unfortunately, this is still a matter of conjecture, for lack of reliable data. The anthropologist can just propose it as an informed speculation to be discussed. On the other hand, it should be

recognized that the vertical dimension among Newars is not combined with other complementary oppositions, as is the case in some other societies where moieties or dual organization prevail. Michael Witzel (1992 : 796-801) has reported a positive correlation between the high/low couple and the gender opposition of male and female in the city of Patan, but this is a Tantric exegesis, of limited occurrence, held by a learned priest and not shared by the laity.

Albeit indirectly, one central finding of this study concerns the unity of Newar civilization. As noted, the polar division of up and down is not confined to certain districts or to a specific type of locality : it embraces the whole Newar land, whether urban or rural. This observation has powerful implications. At the risk of oversimplifying, it can be asserted that the opposition between cities and villages is not a prominent one within the traditional Kathmandu Valley. For instance, house construction and the general lay-out of the habitat are almost the same in both cities and villages. Moreover, my comparative study of urban and rural Jyapu peasants clearly shows that both groups are made up from similar sociological elements. Although elements may be assembled in a different way, the basic structure is identical. Hence, despite considerable local variation and great disparity in social and cultural forms, Newar civilization rests on common principles throughout. Like *guthi* associations, and some typical rituals such as the old age consecration *bura jvanku*, the moiety system belongs to this all-pervasive background, encompassing a whole population well-known for its cultural complexity. This fundamental unity must never be forgotten when studying Newars from an ethnographical, locally-circumscribed point of view.

By way of conclusion, a few words must be said about moieties in the present modern context of Kathmandu Valley. How is the traditional system affected by the tremendous transformations that Newar settlements have been undergoing for the past three or four decades? Such a topic would deserve a more elaborate treatment than our space allows. Just few remarks will have to suffice. The most revealing changes pertain to the political sphere. Since long ago, the faction support within villages and townlets has *tended* to follow the territorial divide of the community between "up" and "down". Such a pattern was present in Pyangaon, where I carried out my first field-work in 1970-1973. Now, interestingly enough, the new political struggles between parties *tend* also to be modelled on territorial moieties. In Panauti for instance, where an old rivalry exists between the two halves of the locality, the upper part was almost entirely communist in the seventies whereas the lower part supported the then prohibited Congress party. Local elections occasioned tension between the two antagonistic sides and the

competing leaders of the settlement (Toffin 1984 : ch.12). On the other hand, it should be noted that in the present period of rapid and unprecedented change, the traditional ritual battles opposing the two halves of a locality sometimes turn into uncontrolled conflicts between political groups (7). Police intervention is often necessary to quell these riots. In other words, old mechanisms are slowly being transformed into new patterns influenced by contemporary issues. But on the whole, the settlements of Kathmandu Valley are still saturated with symbols which are generally taken for granted. And Newar moieties still remain, in most cases, the structural vertebra of the town rituals and the inner life of the villages. To be sure, this is a feature that help the Newars in maintaining their cultural identity in the midst of accelerating pluralism.

Notes

1. - Apparently, the moiety system applies less to Patan. See D. Gellner (1993 : 223).
2. - Interestingly, two Jyapu farmers carry sticks to guard the royal sword during the *khadga* procession which takes place every year during the night of the Vijayadasmi, around the Hanuman Dhoka palace, in Kathmandu : one of them represents the upper town and the other the lower town (B. van den Hoek and B. Shrestha 1992b : 211-213).
3. - Cf. G. Toffin (1984 : ch. VII). Since this book has been published, I undertook new field-work in Theco (1992-1994). Some of the results are presented here.
4. - As correctly stressed by B. van den Hoek and B. Shrestha (1992a : 64-65).
5. - In his interesting article, "Kathmandu as a Sacrificial Arena", B. van den Hoek mentions rapidly (p. 369) some links between the North-South division of the city and the funeral associations *si-* and *sanah guthi* of the Newars of Kathmandu. This question deserves further research.
6. - On this subject, see for instance L. Petech (1984).
7. - Cf. R. Levy (1990 : 473).

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RAIN FOR THE DROUGHT: AN ANTHROPOLOGICAL INQUIRY INTO THE STRUCTURE OF A BUDDHIST FESTIVAL IN KATHMANDU

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Introduction

Rituals as cultural systems always follow certain basic rules that provide a distinct structure and meaning. Most Nepali festivals and rituals, whether they are Hindu, Buddhist, or other follow the historically maintained calendar and a structural organizational pattern. The ritual structure may consist of aims and objectives of the rites or the occasions, the chief and subsidiary ritual functionaries, offering to the deities and the priest, that is, the ritual behavioural-interaction and spiritual codes, and the commensal and/or other forms of interaction. Matsyendranatha, the subject matter of this article, is considered a Saivite saint and first teacher of the Natha sect. But the Buddhists of Nepal have created and maintained a popular cult in his name. Locke, mentions:

“It is not ... that the Buddhists of Nepal worship Matsyendranath as a form of Avalokitesvara. Rather, Matsyendranath.” (1980:405).

In Briggs's genealogy (1973:77) Matsyendranatha figures as the spiritual son and successor of Jalandhar, who was an evil spirit. Matsyendranatha, in turn, initiated four main disciples: Gorkhanatha, Pangal, Nimnath and Parasnath. Matsyendranatha is described as a great yogi inheriting the knowledge indirectly from Siva while he was giving lesson to Parvati. Matsyendra is also known as a disciple of Adinath.

The *vamsāvalis* (chronicles) compiled in the early modern period (18th century AD) describe Matsyendranatha as a popular early medieval Buddhist deity. Later in the Malla period a highly elaborate premonsoon annual festival and several minor rituals as paraphernalia of the cult were created and fostered. The main objective of this paper would be to discuss the main structural aspect of the cult festival and discern its religious, cultural and

political features as inerlinking phenomena of the main festival. The narration of the *bhasa* and other chronicles is taken here to analyse the content of the story related to this famous divine personality and his cult that has grown very popular in Nepal.

Both the Hindu and the Buddhist cosmologies perceive the positions of the stars and planets of our universe as the guiding forces behind all movements of life. The heavenly bodies become even more meaningful and forces to be reckoned with as they control natural and supernatural phenomena where man is but an infinitesimal being. Man, as a smaller part of the large system, needs to maintain a balance with the forces in order to guarantee his survival and prosperity.

Matsyendranatha has three names in one: Matsya, because he was born from fish (Briggs: 125), Indra (the Hindu rain god), and Natha (meaning Lord). According to the Saivite tradition, he was one of the 84 siddhas who roamed the subcontinent and were famous for perfection in their tantric, supernatural power and performances. Matsyendranatha originally hailed from India and had close relation with Nepal. Later however, he was given the status of Karunamaya Lokeswara in Mahayana/Vajrayana Buddhism in Nepal. This was a time when Vajrayana sect was flourishing in the Kathmandu Valley. Both the words Matsya and Indra have connotation related to water. Matsyendranatha is, therefore, related to water, too. An annual festival called *rathajātrā* (chariot festival) is held in honour of this deity in the city of Patan, and the 12 yearly festival is held both in Patan and Bungmati, the latter being the original home of Lokeswara Matsyendranatha, who is also known as Bungadeo or Bungadya (the god of Bungmati). The time of the festival is before the monsoon when rain is expected to fall and hit the parched, dry land bringing a pleasant relief to the community of weary farmers of the Kathmandu Valley and beyond.

The ratha festival is long and colourful often stretching more than a month. There is a group of *jyotishis* (astrologers) to calculate the auspicious moments to begin, continue and end the festival. First of all they study the cosmic position of stars, find the most suitable days/moments to perform various functions and activities of the festival—beginning of the ratha construction, bathing of the god at a township called Lagankhel, the first moving of the ratha from Pulchowk near the famous Asoka stupa, pulling of the ratha from Pulchowk, Gabahal, Sundhara, Lagankhel and arrival at Jawalakhel and finally the demonstration of the ancient *bhoto* kept in the custody of Lokeswara Matsyendranatha (Machhendranatha). Strict tantric rules and codes are followed in order to lift the god, bathe him, place him on throne and perform other activities of the ritual in question.

One major contribution of the Hindu and the Buddhist tantric cults in Nepal could be called the creation of a host of gods and goddesses with clear cut iconography, cult stories and powers or functions attributed to them. Prominent divinities have grown with their own cults whereas lesser deities find themselves associated as subordinate to major gods and goddesses. Farming being the most important vocation of the Nepalese people, several Hindu and Buddhist deities have emerged as guardian deities to promote the farming enterprises and safeguard the farmer's interest. Thus, when the Spring phases away and the Summer approaches, Nepalese eyes begin to scan all corners of the sky above them. It is time patches of dark cloud cluster together and move around. If no such celestial development is in sight, Nepalese mind begins to be concerned about and search for possible causes of the disappearance of the milch cloud. The first step towards warding off the impending danger of drought is to seek divine help. It is common then to adopt host of magico-religious ritual practices as means to pursue Heaven to let the strands of rain loose to drench the thirsty soil below. Such means may range from simple magic ritual, feasting, clan and communal worship and sacrifices to more elaborate and sophisticated tantric festivals such as the one dedicated to Red Matsyendranatha Ratha (car). Festival held annually in Kathmandu in the month of May and organized by the urban Newar farmers and priests and participated by devotees of all vocations and pursuits.

The History

The cult of Matsyendranatha festival is believed to have originated around the late tenth and early 11th century AD although some chronicles date it back to 6th century AD and give credit to King Narendradeva (Anandadeva?) for the beginning of the cult. (Some legends mention Gunakamadeva as the founder of the rain-god's cult). Several cultural and political factors seem to have contributed to the emergence of this tantric cult so popular among the Buddhist believers of Nepal. This was a time when the post-Licchavi Hindu state and polity were shrinking to all time low reputation and experiencing the weakening of the forces that supported them. The central political authority was loosening its grip on the land it subjugated for several centuries. Although politically in the state of confusion and instability, the Kathmandu Valley was becoming a flourishing centre of cultural activities with the emergence of new religious cults, art schools, languages, and scripts. In the lack of coercive Hindu political authority in the centre, Buddhist faiths flourished without disruption. The existing polity was bound to recognize these developments. In far western Nepal, in the Karnali basin, the *khasa* Hindu kings fostered both Hindu and Buddhist faiths in

their kingdoms and some rulers even began their writing with a prayer to Buddha to show openly their faith in Buddhism. Thus Vajrayana had already become the mainstay of the culture of the Kathmandu valley. From here the faith travelled toward west Nepal and finally into different parts of Tibet, often following the historically known "silk road," to Central Asia.

It appears from the available documents that ritualistic Buddhism was not new faith in the culture of the Valley. Mahayana Buddhism was already a pervading force in the early historic society and culture of Kathmandu in particular and Nepal in general. It became stronger still with the emergence a canonical force, monastic institutions and following. The period in question seems to be a very critical period historically and culturally. First, the fall of Shankaracharya had left an emotional, cultural void in the Valley. Second, the fall of Buddhism in India, growth of ritualistic trend in Nepali Buddhism collectively helped usher in a new phase of cultural and ritual revolution. The situation paved the way for tantric Buddhism, the Vajrayana. Several tantric cults had already flourished in east India, and Nepal had obtained their influence in literature and in the art forms especially on stone, bronze and painting.

The Vajrayana school of Buddhism, therefore, emerged as a prominent and viable force after the historic, aborted voyage of Shankaracharya to KTM Valley. Shankaracharya's mission, it appears, could not permanently erase the influence Buddhism had achieved in Nepal throughout history. In fact, the tide of the legendary monk's revitalization of Hinduism, the *adwaitavada*, subsided after his mysterious fall and disappearance in the snowy ridges of the Himalaya.

After the fall of Shankaracharya, the Nepali Buddhists reorganized the monastic orders and institutions with unprecedented zeal and commitment. We find the inscriptional and literary references to the constructions and rennovations of several old and prominent *Viharas* (lit. the Buddhist monastic schools run by the sangha or brotherhood) of the Valley by the Hindu Thakuri rulers and/or men of high births and fortune. The Buddhist pundits from Indian universities, such as Nalanda, Bikramshila, Ballabhi, visited. frequently Kathmandu's prominent viharas and contributed significantly to the development of esoteric schools of Buddhism. The names of Thabahi, Gunbahi, Hiranyavarna, Rudravarna Vihara, among others, figure prominently as centres of Buddhist learning during the period in question. Since the Moslem conquest of India had destroyed the long history of Buddhist faith and culture in the plains of India, it was quite natural that Nepal could become a safe haven and an attraction for the Buddhist men of letters from the south. Nepal also became an academic destination for the visiting Buddhist scholars from Tibet, China and

perhaps, as far as Mongolia. Toward the beginning of the second millenia AD Nepal was witnessing a phenomenal growth and advance of culture mainly due to the new wave of development in Buddhist art, religion, philosophy, script and nature of worship. Many thousand tantric texts were composed and copied during this time in the viharas of Nepal.

The story of Matsyendranatha and foundation of his cult in the Kathmandu Valley is a part of the growth of tantric schools of Buddhism in early medieval Nepal. It would be relevant here to briefly sketch one of the popular versions of the story of the entry of Matsyendranatha to the Kathmandu Valley.

The Drought and Matsyendra's arrival to Nepal: Once *siddha* Gorakhanatha, the resident Saiva siddha of the land of Gorkha was on a visit to the Kathmandu Valley. At some point the *siddha* was insulted by the people of Kathmandu. Hurt and angry, the siddha decided to teach the indisciplined, impolite and inhospitable people of Kathmandu and their king a lesson to be remembered. Thus he used his tantric power, *siddhi*, to bind all the 9 *nāgas* (serpents) together and himself sat on them and started meditating, causing a devastating and prolonged drought for 12 long years. It took long time for the king and his astrologers to find out the cause of the drought: the imprisonment of the nine *nāgas* of the Valley. Acharya Bandhudatta, the renowned Buddhist tantric priest hold the king that rain would fall only when Gorakhanatha would get up from the seat to greet his *guru* Matsyendranatha because then the *nāgas* could be free and move out and bring the cherished rain in the parching Valley. Matsyendra was a resident of Kamarup-Kamakhya (today's Assam in East India). Well advised, the king therefore dispatched a Nepali team led by none others than Bandhudatta along with a Jyāpu, a farmer and the Karkotak *nāga*, the serpent king, to Assam to persuade Matsyendranatha to come to help the famine stricken people of the Valley. The chronicler gives a long, dramatic narration of the entry of Matsyendranatha's caravan to Nepal. In short, the Nepali team was successful in its mission. Matsyendra agreed to come to Nepal. Back in Kamarup, his disciples were not in favour of his migration to Nepal. They even tried to take him back. So toward the last leg of his journey he took the form of a bee. The Nepali team hid him in a jar and he arrived at a place called Kotwal (Kotpala) lake in southern corner of Kathmandu on the Bagmati river. As soon as he arrived in the Valley his disciple Gorakhanatha rose from his seat to greet him and the nine nagas quickly freed themselves and ran away to continue their work of making rain. People were happy after all. Buddhists of Kathmandu made two shrines to house Matsyendranatha—one in Bungmati, where the god had first landed

became his main home, and another in Patan, where the god moves when the sun is in the northern hemisphere. The cult of Matsyendranatha became popular as he was known as Lord of Compassion, Karunamaya Lokeswara. Red was his colour, hence the name Red Matsyendranatha. Several rituals and festivals were developed in his holy name during the calendar year. The famous Rathajatra or the festival of chariot is the supreme festival often lasting more than a month before the monsoon arrives. It is important that monsoon arrives on time so the god is taken out in the chariot through the streets of Patan and thousands of devotees worship him asking him for rain on time and many other blessings for their wellbeing. The festival concludes with the display of an old and bejewelled *bhoto*, or jacket and the last festival is therefore called *bhotojatra*.

Minanatha, the junior associate of Matsyendranatha, also occupies an important place in the cult. A ratha is made for him and he is also taken around the streets of Patan along with Matsyendranatha. Minanatha, like Matsyendra, is regarded as the Master of Senses (Tucci, 1969:62, quoted by owners, 1989:170).

The Objectives of the Festival

Broadly, the Newar rituals are classified into three basic types or groups:

- (a) The secret or the closed type performed and officiated by the Newar priests who have duly gone through the highly specialized ritual, called *dikshya* or initiation. The main objective of such rite is to enhance the power of the deity, ask for special favour, assert transcendental power and authority of the deity that manifest partly through and mediated by the priest/expert himself.
- (b) The open type with mundane character, officiated by the *diskshit* or initiated priest yet participated by the family, the community of relatives and people at large. The goal is more pronounced; and it seeks to maintain the order against impending chaos, immediate concerns and problems.
- (c) The third type can be defined as family or community rituals organized for family's purity, participating member's growth or initiation, other forms of purification and promotion, and finally, communal solidarity and integrity.

The ratha festival of Matsyendranatha combines the characteristics of all the three types in one.

Each festival has some objectives that are expected to be fulfilled while organizing the festival. The functionaries and organizers see to it that the festival is performed accurately according to the standard rules set by the

tradition. Considering the above paradigm some popular objectives of the Matsyendranath festival could be the following:

- (a) to bring rain for the plantation of rice
- (b) to renew and reaffirm the mediating role of the king as the witness to the festival
- (c) to renew the temple hierarchy led by the sangha priest
- (d) to ensure emotional security among the believers
- (e) to link two Newar settlements Patan and Bungmati under the umbrella of the cult
- (f) to mend the relationship between Saiva and Buddhist pantheons over common crises.

As mentioned, the main objective of the Matsyendranatha festival is to ensure the timely monsoon rain for rice cultivation. Rice being the staple crop in the Valley a delay in rain would mean a famine.

The Ritual Structure of the Festival

Festivals and rituals in Nepal have a special structure that maintains significance in the culture they represent. Each festival has a distinct personality of its own. It has a philosophy with defined function and special objectives behind the celebration. In this particular festival one can see a vertical arrangement of persons and groups with horizontal functions. All those involved in the festival form the ritual structure of the ratha festival.

When the cult was first introduced in the Valley, the clergy and the king played an important role to make it popular. Hence the original structure remained like this:

Paradigm one

- | | |
|------------------------|--|
| 1. The Spiritual World | the God (Matsyendranatha) |
| 2. The Ritual World | (a) the King as the Chief Client, and Sacrificer |
| | (b) the Priest as the Mediator |
| 3. The Mundane World | Farmers as participants |

As the cult grew in its intensity, its ritual, festive aspect grew to be more elaborate also. As a result the structure took a complex shape with different sets of performers. Posited in vertical order the traditional structure of the Matsyendra *ratha* festival could look like the following:

Paradigm two

- | | |
|---------------------------|--|
| 1. The Spiritual World | (a) Matsyendra, the cult figure
(b) Kumari, the female companion of Matsyendra |
| 2. The Ritual World | (a) The King, the sovereign protector, witness, client
(b) The Sangha and Priest, the main ritual functionaries |
| 3. The Political World | (a) the King's court, witness
(b) the Gorkha army unit, band player, honour and protection to deity |
| 4. The Mundane World | (a) the helpers fixing and pulling ratha
(b) the caretakers managing the jatra
(c) the farmers, lay devotees, participants |
| 5. The Supernatural World | (a) demons who disturb the god's trail.
(b) the nagas, or serpents |

Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha or the Buddhist *triratna* (three jewels) are well represented in this festival. The community of priests along with the followers makes the *Sangha*, the Buddhist Brotherhood that executes all the ritual functions related to the festivals. Representing the mundane/political world there is the *guthi* to oversee the entire festival from the beginning to the completion. There is also a separate, government *guthi* office to take care of the vast area of the god's land and organise cult festivals.

The jatra is controlled, regulated and organized by the group of upper caste Newar priests although like in many Newar festivals and rituals, other caste Newars also play traditionally ascribed role in the festival. It functions to strengthen their clan and caste solidarity. The king plays an important role as the human guardian of the people. Therefore he figures in the structure of the festival as the political counterpart of the god. Others figuring in the structure play equally an important ritual role in the whole structure. Because the god was brought to make rain and farmers tilled the land of the king and the priests, it was imperative and quite natural that they took the opportunity to show their commitment to the festival. The chronicler indeed mentions that Acharya Bandhudatta had actually taken a Jyapu from the city of Patan along with him to Kamrupa. The inclusion of a farmer in the trip is symbolically significant because one major function of the deity was to assume the status of Lokeswara Karunamaya and to bring rain and please the king, the farmers and save the life of the people of the Valley.

It appears that the original founders, namely, the Malla king, the cult priests of the Vajrayana sect of Buddhism, and other functionaries such as the farmers made the festival all-pervading and colourful. The community of farmers settled around the shrine and behind the priests's block in Bungmati. Other caste Newars of Bungmati also became part of the cult as the construction and movement of the huge ratha for the annual festival was to be done by other caste than the priests. More families then moved from Patan and settled in the town of Bungmati to form the large community of cult functionaries and farmers to till the vast area of the god's land in this part of the Valley.

The Panejus or the priests: The *Paneju* is a respectable term used to address the class of residential priests responsible for organizing and officiating the host of rites and rituals around the cult of Matsyendranatha. The Panejus constitute a team of thirty-one initiated priests commissioned by the the greater *sangha*, the Buddhist brotherhood, and approved by the government of Nepal to conduct regular worship in turn and perform the jatra festivals and other regular rituals. They identify themselves as a family of thirty-two including the Lokeswara himself. During the annual rathajatra, the old *panejus* train the duly initiated new boys who are likely to substitute them later. After initiation the male Shakya and Bajracharyas can be potential priest/panejus of the sangha and thus receive a place in the cult as priest/servants. The ones officiating in the bhotojatra are commissioned by the government.

The *paneju* status is hereditary. They come from different with various clans families and as such they intermarry among themselves. The group is divided between Patan and Bungmati as there are two main shrines for the god. Whether Buddha or Hindu, the main function of Dharma is to maintain order by doing away with the prevailing chaos, disorder, and crises of all kinds. The rituals or *jatras* are the more pronounced expression of the practical aspects of religion; the objective and is to bring the god participants together in one environment and setting.

The other actors that feature in the structure of the jatra are as follows:

The farmer who cured the eyes of naga's wife got the *bhoto* from the naga as a gift; the demon who stole the farmer's bhoto when the latter was busy in the field; the naga or the resident divine serpent king who accompanied the team to bring Matsyendranatha to the Kathmandu Valley; the king who, as the high Jajman (client to the rites) and a witness to the *bhoto* episode forms an important part of the structure. By his presence, the Hindu king is showing his concern in the cult for the rain and to see that rice farming goes all right in his kingdom.

The Main Highlights of the Festival

The festival is called the *rathajatra*, the chariot festival. The god is kept on a built-in throne in a 60-foot tall chariot, made mainly of wood. A chariot is an honour to the deity, manifestation of his status, power and part of the regalia, the royalty. Taking the chariot around the city is a gala moment, an element added to the cult to show his presence. People like to be blessed by the god touching him physically. In a stratified manner, the chariot is pulled by: men, boys, females, then common people along the streets of Patan. Hard labour is considered a service to the god. Besides, the god is bringing rain so touching the *ratha* or giving hand to pull it a bit further can therefore bring a good luck. He is All-Compassionate, Karunamaya. Being a part of the *ratha* festival is considered a work of religious merit. Then it also pays because from early period people donated lands to the god and he began to have lots of property. Donated rice fields were distributed among the servants and priests. It made a good living for so many functionaries of the cult.

The major *ratha* festival is celebrated every 12 years. It is said that in the beginning the huge *ratha* was constructed or fixed annually at Bungmati and drawn several kilometers north to Patan for a tour of the city and for the *bhotojatra*. Later on it became difficult to organize such a long and arduous trip for the god. There were also accidents along the way. So a new plan was made according to which the *rathajatra* began to be performed annually in Patan and Bungmati. For the 12 yearly festival a whole new set of *ratha* is prepared with new panels of wood, a new set of clothes and a new set of gold and silver ornaments to decorate the god and his chariot.

The *ratha* festival concludes with the *bhotojatra* or the festive display of a *bhoto* at Jawalakhel. The *bhoto* story has been a part of the main festival, so it would be relevant to mention it in brief.

The chronicles mention that the *bhoto* belonged to Karkotaka, the king of the nagas in the subterranean world of Kathmandu. Once his wife's eye sore was cured by a *Jyapu*. Pleased with his service, Karkotaka gave the farmer his valuable jacket or *bhoto*. But one day a demon stole the jacket he had taken off while working in the field. On the *rathajatra* day in Patan the farmer saw a tall strange figure adorned with his jacket. He knew the jacket was his so he jumped on him to snatch it away. But the farmer was a poor match for the giant, and a tough fight for the jacket ensued. Soon the case was taken to the king's court, whereupon the king gave a verdict that since it was difficult to determine who the real owner was the jacket would be kept in the custody of Matsyendranatha himself until the real owner came with reliable evidence to claim it. Every year the *rathajatra* in Patan concludes at Jawalakhel with the display of the *bhoto* to the people and the

king is still the main witness to the fact that the article is safe and none of the feuding parties has come to claim it. Yet it is believed that all the parties concerned—the naga, the farmer, and the demon come to witness the *jatra* even today; they witness the *bhoto* and pay homage to Matsyendra and return. Since rain is the main objective of the month-or-so long festival, the main focus is on the monsoon rain that makes all happy.

The festival tells the history of Bungmati—how the town grew with the popularity of the cult of Matsyendranatha. The land was fertile, and as priests would not till their land, they needed tillers so the Newars of the farmer caste came down from Patan to settle here.

The god seated on a golden throne is pulled on a huge, wheeled *ratha*. Along the route. He is awaited by thousands of people who seek his blessings as He travels through the streets of Patan. People assemble along the street to welcome Him there and worship him. People's participation is what makes the *jatra* so elaborate, as a large crowd comes to participate in this festival.

The Role of the King in the Festival

The king played a very important role in the *ratha* festival from the very beginning. First of all, according to the legends, it was the king who sent the Nepali delegation to Assam to bring Matsyendranatha to Kathmandu. He then became part of the ritual system. In the past, the Malla kings (prior to 1768 A.D. conquest of the Valley by Gorkha Shahas) used to exchange their sword with Matsyendranatha. The sword was sent to Bungmati and the *ratha* festival would then commence from Bungmati. The king as head of the state and descendant of Anandadeva (?) and the founder of the cult took part as the main *jajaman* (client) of the rites performed in the *rathajatra*. Later a Newar *jajman* substitute was selected and this continues till today. The rite of sword exchange does not take place but the king of Nepal takes part in the last part of the festival.

First, more than month long *rathajatra* is held concluding with the *bhotojatra* at Jawalakhel. On the *Bhotojatra* day, the king takes his seat to watch the old *bhoto* displayed to the public. Along with the arrival of the began the god Kathmandu rain and the cult of the rain god was established and the festival started. The king's role is that of the main witness of the display of *bhoto*, the jewel-studded jacket kept in the custody of Matsyendra as per the agreement between the feuding Jyapu and the demon. The last occasion is held to demonstrate that functionaries and the king guarantee the safety of it.

The king along with nation's high dignitaries attends the *bhotojatra*. The king's presence also gives a political colour to this festival. Rain for

agriculture is the main objective of the *bhotojatra* but the secular demand is met through religious festival. It also renews bonds between the members of family, relatives and kinship network. The king is there to assert Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha as they influence the life of his people.

By placing the king in the structure of the ritual the founders of the cult made the involvement of the state of permanent feature of the ritual. The king is powerful on earth but without the blessing of the god the land cannot produce and sustain him and his people. So it was necessary for the founders to recreate the structure with divinity, the king, who is part-divinity, and other functionaries at different level and phases of the ritual. The festival then stabilized and perpetuated. It therefore maintains a functional significance in the Newar society.

The king has to show his presence in the *bhoto* festival to observe that gods, demons, nagas and farmers are happy in his kingdom means that there will be timely monsoon and people's expectations are assured.

Thus the Hindu king's presence and participation in this festival clearly demonstrates the strong element of religious syncretism in the performances of several Hindu and Buddhist rites and festivals prevalent in the Valley.

The Festival Cosmology, Religious Harmony and Syncretism

A typical festival in Nepal has a cosmology of its own within the periphery of the cult it represents. In this particular festival the universe of the god is divided into two hemisphere: the north and the south. There are two shrines made for him, located in two poles—north and south—Patan and Bungmati. The god moves back and forth between the two shrines, the only god in Nepal to have two dwellings at his disposal. When the sun goes to northern hemisphere the god travels to north, when the sun goes to southern hemisphere he goes to south, Bungmati. The god's movement according to the movement of the sun is important and symbolic. The sun causes the seasons to change from one to the next and provides water, warmth, and other elements of life. Also, there will be no health problem, for the the people who worship him and his spiritual companion, the Kumari. Kumari was given to the god at the final leg of his entry to Kathmandu. Since then she has remained his spiritual companion and guide. The office of the Bungmati Kumari is maintained by the clan families of the Bajracharya priests of the town.

It is to be noted here that the god is partly Hindu as one of the 84 *siddhas* of the natha cult that became popular in the early and late medieval period but he is Lord Compassionate, the Karunamaya, too. The *jatra* revolves around his cult. This festival therefore demonstrates the religious/ritual harmony between the ruler and the people in the beginning of the millenia.

How and when the Saiva saint was given the status of Lokeshwara can be an interesting topic for further research. But according to the *parampara* (tradition) of the Gorakhnath yogis what is certain is that both Matsyendra and Gorakhnath came from the same Saivite siddha cult. Their relation was that of teacher and pupil. The Vajrayana Buddhist tradition has depicted the Saiva saint as one who hated the people of the Kathmandu Valley and used his siddhi to capture the nagas and stop rain for a prolonged period. They then invited Matsyendranatha to come to rescue the nagas and provided relief to the king and people. Looking from this perspective the teacher-pupil relation seems odd. Gorakhnath symbolises anger and Matsyendra demonstrates Karuna, Compassion. One can say that both the Hindu and the Buddhist tantric system stand a rival position. Buddhist tantric system triumphs over the Hindu. But the king comes as a mediator and occupies a position in the structure.

With the passage of time, however, Matsyendra began to be regarded as the rain god so equally important for both the Buddhists and the Hindus of the country. The two names—Machhendranatha, the siddha, and Lokeshwara, Matsyendranatha—and forms of the god demonstrate that there is strong element of religious syncretism in this cult as both Hindus and Buddhists worship him now. On Shivaratri festival Hindus worship Matsyendra's *paduka* (Briggs, p. 131).

This ratha festival brings three worlds—the heaven (the god), the earth (the king and the people) and the underworld (the nagas and the demons) together. All of them have a significant role in the structure of this festival.

The *naga* cult remains important in Asia. The legendary history describes the Kathmandu Valley as the home of many nagas in the prehistoric age. Then, it was called *nagrhad*, or the serpent lake.

The entire worship of the *ratha* festival is based on the Mahayani/Vajrayani tantric system. The *ratha* is a centre of the universe, the cosmos. It is supported by tantric gods—the four Bhairavas whose eyes are painted in the huge wheels of the ratha. Similarly, the Karkotaka naga and his wife in the form of huge and long wooden beams supporting the tall *ratha*. The nagas represent rain and general welfare of the people. The close relationship between Matsyendranatha and naga king Karkotaka is old and common in India also. Briggs mention of Karkotaka naga *tirtha* (pilgrimage) in Ujjain (1973:121).

The main puja ritual inside the *ratha* is done by the Vajracharya Newar priests who are initiated according to the Vajrayana *tantric* system. In the beginning of the *ratha* festival, however, it is the Nikhu caste Saivite Hindu Newar who ritually begin the festival using Hindu tantric system and then hand the rituals over to the Buddhist priests who then complete the festival.

As mentioned elsewhere, more complex tantric system flourished in the Kathmandu Valley approximately after the tenth century A.D. Tantric ritual texts influenced the festivals both at micro—the family/community level and macro the universal level's where events are dramatized and elaborate *pujas* are performed. Although Matsyendranatha has his origin in the Saiva Hindu pantheon, his ritual now rests mainly on the Newar culture and the entire priesthood comes from the Newar community only. Owens (1989:165) argues that even the Kanphatta yogis (followers of siddha Gorakhanatha) regard Matsyendranatha as a divine figure, the Lokeswara Padmapani. Owens draws this conclusion from an image of Padmapani at the entrance of the siddha Gorakhanatha shrine at Gorkha where Matsyendranatha is shown as the Hindu trinity (Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva in one) in a panel with *hamsa* (duck, the vehicle of Brahma; garuda, the vehicle of Vishnu, and nandi the vehicle of Shiva). This suggests that in the cult of Matsyendranatha both natha Saiva and Buddhist tantra are coalescing here. The participation by thousands of Buddhist and Hindu believers and other people of the valley makes the jatra colourful and lively.

The cosmology of the Matsyendranatha ratha festival is not limited to Patan and Bungmati. As Owens mentions (1989:167) Matsyendra maintains ritual relationship with the five other prominent Lokeswaras—Minanatha, (Chakwadya), Kwapadya, Chobhadya, Janmadya of Kathmandu Valley and Naladya from Nala in East Nepal. Red Matsyendra also has his form duly worshipped in the small old, predominantly Hindu Newar township of Dolakha in east Nepal.

The God, the Kumari, the king, the priest, the farmer, and the naga together represent the cosmology of the benevolent world. The demons represent the nether world of the nefarious elements but in the prevalent belief system and mythology, the good and the bad go together, and it is only to subdue the evil that the gods avail themselves to the situation. The power relation has to be in a balance, or at least not bending on the evil side.

The Social Significance of the Festival

Through various esoteric rites, rituals and festivals, the ethnically heterogeneous Newar population of medieval times was organized into ritually homogeneous cultural system. The process of cultural integration was realized in early medieval period in Kathmandu Valley when '*Nepal bhasa*' became the lingua franca of the valley population. People worshipped the same class of gods and goddesses and participated collectively in festivals originated in the valley. The major functions of the rituals and festivals were then to maintain solidarity among the highly

heterogenous clan/caste structure. It is the functional nature of the ritual and religious system of the Newar of Kathmandu. From the priests to the *Pode* all have part in the festivals. The festival strengthens the jati based social organization and the interjati relations. All associated with the cult are servants of the god, and all have been given a role to play in order to complete this and many other festivals and rites organized around the cult of Matsyendranath.

Feasting During the Festival: Robertson-Smith theorized that clan solidarity is maintained through ritual commensality and rituals. (quoted by Bloch, Violence and Blessing year, p. 4)

Ritual feasting and commensality have a social significance in Nepal. Newar culture, especially the rites and festivals involve communal eating. Most of the clan and religious rituals involve eating together. In this particular *jatra* also they picnic at Jawalakhel during the *bhotojatra*. In the 12 year festival they picnic along the way. Guests, especially family relatives are invited to join the feast. After puja eating together is important. The meal may not be different than regular dish except that there are more varieties of as guests are also joining. Commensality increases solidarity according to the Newar belief system. And now the god is out to bless the people, the *ratha* is the core of the total ceremony.

The *rathajatra* is also an occasion for thousands of people to get away from their hard labour in the farming and enjoy family get-together and entertain themselves. After the conclusion of the festival one can witness young people from the villages collecting in small groups, singing and dancing much unaware of the festival they come to attend.

The religiosity of the festival is closely connected with the secular: the need of rain for the field, the daily hardships such as diseases and other problems in the hot and dry months of the year, losses in business are all reported to the god and his blessings sought. He is Karunamaya, the one full of Compassion.

The Elements of Continuity in the Festival

Matsyendranatha festival is important because of its timing and its focus on farming system in the Valley, so we see wholehearted participation by the population of the Valley regardless of caste, ethnic background and religious following.

While the *viharas* flourished and fostered the theological aspect of religion people in general created variety of rituals in and outside the *vihara* to express and strengthen their belief in the growing number of cult rites and rituals. Since tantrism was the focus of the religion then, tantric rituals

asserting the supremacy of the Shakya Vajracharya caste priest were created and fostered-the samyak puja, white and red Matsyendranath a festival and host of other rites and festivals began to be observed around prominent deities. By participating in this particular festival and its rituals, the common people see their objectives being fulfilled, the Lokeswara blessing them. It is the time when people seek to obtain:

- (a) Union with the Supernatural through offering/worship, participation
- (b) Coming of monsoon rain from Matsyendranatha, who is full of Compassion, and
- (c) Welcoming of the god to his original home after nearly six months in Patan.

As in most of the Buddhist religious rituals, the community of the 31 *panejus* mediate with the god and make it possible for the people to obtain these goals. As part of the total cosmology of the rain festival, they themselves share these concerns of the common Buddhist Newars of the Valley. Besides their role as holy men in service of god, they have their secular functionalities and believers. They also maintain their farms in the field and rain is their concern as well.

The *jatra* is specially meaningful for the people of Bungmati. On the concluding day they see the god travelling back with them after six long months of voidness and desertion they have seen in the shrine, which is the centre of hope, veneration and esteem. So the enthusiasm in Bungmati is more than other places. Nearly all elderly people of Bungmati make it a point to go to the *bhotojatra* festival to participate and return home that evening with the god after the conclusion of the *bhotojatra*. The god is brought amidst colourful, royal procession led by the priests, a contingent of old royal army that fires powder guns and thousands of devotees holding long oil lamps and incenses following.

There are few places on the way between Jawalakhel where the *jatra* concludes and Bungmati, the ultimate summer destination of the god. While the procession passes through these spots the god is kept in a very low profile thereby suspending gunfire and music so that his demonic kinsfolk who are believed to be stalking thereabout do not know where he is at that particular moment and therefore cannot jump at the party of devotees to snatch him away from them. It is believed that Matsyendra's kins are always out on the look to force him back to India. For the Nepali Buddhists in particular and farmers of the Valley in general it will be too high a risk to loose him, for it would mean the possibility of inviting yet another crisis of prolonged drought and a loss beyond description.

The Buddhist devotees of the Valley go back to Bungmati on the fourth day after arrival of the god to Bungmati. They perform special puja for the god. It is called *bica puja* performed to honour the god. On this occasion the people want to know how the god is doing and be sure all is well with Him. On the *bica puja* day devotees come from Patan, Bhaktapur, Kathmandu and also from other Newar (and non-Newar) settlements. Besides major festivals there are also more than 200 annual calendrical rituals observed in the name of Matsyendranatha (Owens: 175).

Conclusion

With wider following and cultural relevance in the pre-monsoon dry months, Matsyendranatha is very popular and his power to rally the wider sections of people remains. The prolonged *rathajatra* still draws crowd from the Valley and beyond. The final ceremony or the *bhotojatra* has its own character. On this day there is collective blessing from the god. Also, there is collective participation when god, king, priests, nagas from the traditional structure and people, the functional elements of the festival come together.

The festival itself has gone through changes over the centuries through selection pressures as Bloch mentions () new features are always added to the festivals and rituals over time.

Although Matsyendra, the main godhead came originally from the natha cult, and was a noted siddha listed as one of the 84 he was pulled to the Vajrayani Buddhist tradition in Nepal. He slowly lost his prominent Hindu identification, character and functions. The tone of the entire range of rituals and festival organized around his cult is set according to the Buddhist tenets where the priests, who prepare the setting for these rites and preside over them, try to show how powerful and Compassionate the deity is. As the chief functionaries of the Sangha of the Vajrayana school of Buddhism they also assert the need of cosmic balance between god or the supernatural, the nature, the king, the human and the subhuman aspects of existence. Since all these powers can create and recreate the world, the ritual organized to replay and recreate their function must make efforts to perpetuate the structure without much extrapolation.

Acharya Bandhudatta regarded as the accredited ancestor of the Vajracharya of the Valley is almost a mythical figure not seen in archaeological documents. References to Matsyendranatha as Karunamaya or Lokeshwara are not found in archaeological documents. Bandhu Acharya along with the Jyapu farmer, the king, and the Kumari then formed the original structure of the cult and the festival. Today nobody questions the origin and ancestry of this priest. It was a time when Mahayana Buddhist monks (Vajracharyas)

formed the base of the *vihara* culture and were being initiated to take over as priests of the *vihara* rituals. Buddhism was getting into ritualistic trends. On social context a new ethnicity-to use the anthropological jargon-was being formulated. Later it was known as "Newar" (lit. people of Nepal) after the name of the place Nepala or, Newala. The Vajrayana Newar monastic tradition then naturally regarded Bandhudatta, the noted tantric priest as the human founder of the Matsyendra cult.

One important feature of the Matsyendranatha festival is the inclusion of demons in the narration. Here one question may arise: Why the presence of the demons in the Matsyendranatha festival and what is their ritual role? It should be made clear that the Hindus and Buddhists have very strong sense of evil developed in their mythologies. It is common in oriental cultures as well. In this particular festival there are more than one instances of the evil's presence:

(a) The legends mention that Matsyendranatha himself came from demonic background as the youngest son of the demon (Shi?) although the demons do not surface in the scene. His relation with Jalandhar has already been discussed. They are presumed to have come to Nepal to make an attempt to take Matsyendra back to Kamrupa and therefore cause fear in the mind of the people who are organizing the festival.

(b) There is also a demon who stole the farmer's jacket from the field and appeared to watch the *ratha* festival in Patan only to be caught by the farmer who owned the jacket. Even after being exposed to people by his unusual strength over common man, he put up a fight with the ordinary farmer.

Thus the myths and legends found in the Valley of Kathmandu are full of demons and their heroic deeds. Krishna, the epic hero of Matagarata had drained the water from the lake that for long had engulfed Kathmandu in the ancient times and had fought two heroic demons, finally killing them. Their flesh, bones and blood constituted what is today Kathmandu's fertile soil.

There is lack of sources to trace the evolution of this festival through early to the late medieval periods. The narration in the *vamsavalis* is the only major source of the festival and the cult. One can draw the conclusion that the focus of the Buddhist elite then was to renew the existing ritual hierarchy led by the priest. Secondly, it was to show and prove the fact that *tantric* practice could cause miracles if practiced by an expert. Thirdly, the Vajracharya priests were expert on *tantra* practices in early medieval Nepal. Buddhist priests, whether in the monastery or outside it, were and still are the only experts to organize them and bring desirable results.

Lastly, this article attempts to show how a complex ritual structure and function can be maintained in the setting of a particular *jatra* or festival. Finally, this particular festival shows tantric philosophical and ritual link

with east India. First of all, two *siddhas* seem to bring Nepal and India together. Nepal had welcomed noted Buddhist scholars from that part of India during the early medieval period. The east Indian influence on religion, art and other forms of life is already discussed above the introduction of the cult of the rain god Matsyendranatha are of the exantiles. It could be best described as a form of continuity of the earlier relationship between the two civilizations.

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NOTES ON THE URĀY AND THE MODERNIZATION OF NEWAR BUDDHISM

Todd T. Lewis

Introduction

For centuries, the Urāy (Nep. Udās) merchants have been among the most influential Newar Buddhist lay groups and a significant community among the Kathmandu Valley's cultural elite. This article discusses the prominent sociocultural aspects of this distinctive Buddhist merchant caste of Kathmandu and considers the modernization of Newar Buddhism with reference to them. I am pleased to contribute to a special volume in memory of Nepal's great scholar Dhanavajra Vajracarya, whose ground breaking work will continue to inform generations of future scholars who wish to understand Nepal's rich historical legacy.

Buddhist Identity as Social Marker

Modern Urāy explain their name as a derivative of *upāsaka*, a Sanskrit term meaning "devout layman" and see their group's Buddhist identity expressed in other areas: they eschew the "Five Professions" prohibited in the Buddhist texts (trade in weapons, animals, meat, wine, poison) and uphold the ethos of non-violence in personal relations and ritual preferences. In addition to not eating beef and pork, Urāy also abstain from chicken eggs and meat, marking a restriction based upon a Buddhist story (Lewis 1984:204).

Pan-Newar "caste logic" generally recognizes "Urāy" as *vaiśyas* who rank as a high Buddhist caste just below the Śākyas and Vajrācāryas (Furer-Haimendorf 1975). Urāy social customs have been thoroughly aligned with the Indic *dharmaśāstras*, although with a reworking usually well-adapted to Mahāyāna Buddhist doctrine (Lewis 1994).

Urāy patronage to the Newar *saṃgha* of householder Bare (Vajrācāryas and Śākyas) and their devotion to celestial *bodhisattvas* and tantric traditions have marked their adherence to Mahāyāna Buddhism. Each family has a Vajrācārya priest from one of the city's eighteen main *vihāras*; the family *guruju*'s traditional role is to preside over all the family's life-

cycle rituals and to impart simple religious teachings, including every person's first initiation in meditation (*nikhan*). Local patronage has been such that there has always been an elite group of Vajrācāryas: some have mastered Sanskrit and become learned interpreters of Buddhist literature, while others have become adepts of *vajrayāna* practice who have passed down tantric initiations (*dikṣā*) within the Vajrācārya-Śākya and Urāy communities (Gellner 1992).

The wealthiest and most pious Urāy have donated the funds to maintain the Svayambhū *stūpa* complex and other centers of local devotional practice, such as Jana Bāhā, Bijesvarī, and Si Gha: Bāhā. As discussed below, Urāy trade relations with Tibet also sustained Tibetan Buddhism in the Kathmandu Valley (Lewis and Jamspal 1988; Lewis 1989, Lewis 1993).

It is still commonly written in scholarship and popular literary sources about Nepal that religion in the Kathmandu Valley is a jumble of Buddhism inextricable from Hinduism. "Syncretism" may be an apt term to describe the beliefs and practices of some communities of farmers and other castes, but a typical Urāy, Śākya, or Vajrācārya would wax indignant at the suggestion that these faiths were interchangeable. For them, being Buddhist, not Hindu, has deep meaning, both as the basis of personal spiritual practice and in the deeply-felt sentiments of group identity.

Urāy Subcastes

There are numerous Urāy subgroups and their names suggest origins as artisan and mercantile specialists, as most refer to craftsman identities: Siṃkaḥmi (colloquial 'Śthāpit') carpenters, Kamsakār ('Kasāḥ') metal workers, Tāmraḥkār 'Tamoṭ' or 'Tamaḥ') bell metal workers, Silpakār ('Lwahākaḥmi' stone masons, Sikrīkār ('Āwā') tilers, Rājkarṇikār ('Marikaḥmi') confectioners, and Sindūrakār powder sellers. Only the Baniyā ('Merchants') and Tulādhars ('Scale Holders') lack names indicative of specific occupational origins. The Kathmandu Baniyā traditional occupation is herbalist.

Group Origins

Although Urāy caste origins cannot be discerned from known historical records, it is clear that group history is multistranded. The multiplicity of separate clan deities (*digu dyah*) and the dispersal of different family tantric deities (*āgā dyah*) suggest that Urāy origins and avenues of assimilation varied. Some Urāy lineages probably date back to Śākya or Vajrācārya males who did not undergo Buddhist initiations (and so fell one status level), and there were doubtless also children of mixed marriages

between Vajrācārya or Śākya men with women of lower caste groups. The Rājkarṇikār and Tāmraṅkar subcastes have been incorporated from lineages in Patan where these groups are not distinctively Buddhist. Another likely avenue of assimilation was through admitting the children of Urāy second marriages with Tibetan wives when Urāy “diaspora traders” lived in Tibet.

All nine Urāy groups today constitute a single marriage circle defined by participation in common ritual and commensal activities. Within this circle is internal stratification: lineages with surnames Tulādhār, Baniyā, Kaṃsakār, and Tāmraṅkar are ranked highest in contemporary Kathmandu. The special prestige of Tulādhār lineages is shown by the growing practice of other Urāy subgroups now abandoning their older designations and giving “Tulādhār” as their family surname. Some modern Tulādhārs have suggested that there were two original Urāy core groups: families with trading ties to Tibet and those still known by the name “Baniyā”.

The Urāy and Tibetan Relations

Over the last millennium, cultural relations between Nepal and Tibet have waxed and waned, with Newar artisans and religious teachers conveying Indo-Buddhist culture northward in the earlier period. In recent centuries, transplanted Tibetan lamas and monasteries have affected Nepal’s religious culture. The Urāy, especially the Lhasa traders, have been prominent in this relationship both as patrons and Buddhist practitioners.

Tibetan records on the Kathmandu Valley in the Malla era illumine the unique evolution of the Urāy as a separate caste only in Kathmandu, the Newar city most dominated by Tibetan traders (Lewis and Jamspal 1988; Lewis 1989). Malla Kathmandu *deśa*’s complex relationship between Newar Kings, diaspora merchants, and Tibetan lamas developed in a synergistic manner: Urāy merchants firmly established the Kathmandu Valley as a frontier center of Tibetan monasticism; directly and indirectly, the Nepalese state profited significantly from the success of Kathmandu merchant families trading in Tibet (Regmi 1971; Bista 1978). Nepal’s rulers had many reasons to support resident Tibetan lamas and their Newar allies to insure a sound trade relationship with the Tibetan state. This alliance broke down in the later Rana period, and it was Urāy devotion to a charismatic Tibetan *lama* in the early 1920s that caused debilitating fissures within the Kathmandu Buddhist communities (Rosser 1966).

Devotional Music

The Urāy still preserve the oldest devotional music played by Newar Buddhists: the Guṃlā, Dhāḥ, and Pāñca Tāl *bājās*. These groups orchestrate group drumming accompanied by cymbal-playing, woodwinds, horns, and

singing at festivals. All of the *bājās* are still performed by the separate Urāy subgroups acting alone and not all groups have sustained each. These musical groups clearly had their genesis in the common interest to effectively worship the Buddhas, bodhisattvas, and gods. Up to the present, a *bājā*'s ability to play well is valued as a positive reflection on the sub-community's reputation.

In the later Rana period, when the *bhajan* style of Hindu devotional music was imported from India, Urāy also began to play the instruments of this genre (tabla, sitar, harmonium, violin) and compose a myriad songs in Newari to Buddhist and Hindu divinities. Local neighborhood *bhajans* still orchestrate singing every night, and these groups draw members from most locally-residing castes. It is this cultural performance that has captured the imagination of modern merchants: Urāy poets and composers have transposed a bhakti Hindu medium in Indic languages to create a popular hybrid Newari expression of Buddhist devotionism. Some of Nepal's finest musicians on the violin, sitar and harmonium have come from the Urāy Buddhist *bhajans*.

Samyak and Kumār Pyākhā

All the great Newar religious festivals reflect the Valley's socio-political history, and two of these in Kathmandu, Samyak and Kumār Pyākhā, are marked by prominent Urāy participation and are important expressions of the merchant-royal palace relationship.

The Samyak festival of Kathmandu, the largest of the city's Buddhist celebrations, is held every twelve years. It assembles a microcosm of Newar civilization—from king to peasant laborers, artisans to priests, officiants of almost every Newar Buddhist temple. Each group has a defined role that coordinates a mass ritual donation to images of Dipankara Buddha, other Buddhist deities, and to the Valley's Newar *saṃgha*.

The Kathmandu Samyak festival expresses the nature of the relationship that once existed between the Malla kings and Newar Buddhist community. On the first evening of Samyak, all the images from private homes and public temples are brought to the old Hanuman Dhoka Palace, where they receive offerings from the royal family and the general public. Next day, all process to a field at the southeast of Svayambhū hill. Seated in a roofed observation platform (which in 1980 and 1993 was surmounted by a *stūpa*), the king then observes while the assembled deities and the *saṃgha* receive special offerings. In Samyak, the polity's group relations can be discerned: the first day sees all Buddhas and bodhisattvas from town and periphery gather outside the old palace, thus defining and blessing it as a legitimate and sacred center; on day two, the king then attends as royla witness who

observes image-bearing merchants, and others make a mass *dāna* offering that in theory includes every member of every Newar *saṃgha*. Most Uray lineages join certain Śākya *saṃghas* in a common *guthi* that organizes and finances these proceedings (Tuladhar 1980).

In Kumār Pyākhā, the royal cult to Durgā-Taleju, provides another locus of the Palace-Uray alliance. The Uray again take a leading position among Kathmandu's Buddhist laymen: two groups provide male dancers of Kumār and Daitya during Mohini (Nep. Dasain) in service of the Kathmandu ruler's offerings to the goddess, who is regarded as protectress of the state. This is another simulacrum of the chief exchange relationships in Nepal's traditional polity: by taking on these roles, the Uray express their alliance with the king and symbolically focus their religious power, derived from Vajrayāna Buddhism, toward the preservation of the state; in return, the King acknowledges the Buddhists' high standing in society and the pragmatic power of their religious tradition. The special interdependence between Kathmandu royalty and Newar bazaar merchants is still expressed in the yearly continuance of these festivals.

Modern Theravāda Buddhism

In the recent cultural history of Nepal, the Uray have been particularly influential in the transplantation of another form of Buddhism: Theravāda monasticism from Sri Lanka, Burma, and meditation centers of India. Uray patrons have been leaders in building Theravāda institutions, and a number of prominent monks have come from their families. The Theravadin movement has been successful at attracting the Uray middle class, especially women, who desire more freedom in their activities. For the many Newars attracted to it, the modernist Theravada makes intellectual understanding and meditation instruction central to its practice of Buddhism. The doctrinal emphasis against caste and class discrimination has also resonated with the democratic changes that have swept Nepal.

Modernity and Buddhist Tradition

The nature of religious change among the Uray gives an important case study reading of the wider changes affecting modern Newar society. The Uray occupy a spectrum of influential positions in modern Nepal. Some of the largest import-export companies, food retailers, and construction firms are their enterprises. Families that have long benefited from wealth and access to education have members who now occupy the highest echelons of power in politics, government service, international development, and education.

Within the old city markets, the rapid rate of contemporary social change in the Kathmandu Valley is clearly discernible, as many of the institutions and traditions that existed in the isolated city-states of the Malla era have slowly devolved in the modern period. Many *guthis* have disappeared, many festival observances have declined, much sacred art has been sold off or stolen, and many *vihāras* and temples have fallen into disrepair.

Over the past century, at least the loss of support from the laity has also led to a decline in doctrinal, meditative, and ritual competency among Vajrācāryas. Cycles of negative reciprocity have produced a downward spiral of lost patronage, status, spiritual capabilities. This process has gone on for well into a fourth generation in many instances. The Newar *saṃgha*, tied solely to a system of group leadership based upon simple age seniority, has attempted no reforms or innovations to arrest its own decline.

The cuts in patronage to the Newar *saṃgha* have been made both by the Newar laity, particularly the Urāy, and through diminishing government support. For example, many Urāy still give the same stipend to the family priest as they gave twenty years ago; similarly, the royal *dāna* made at the modern Samyak festivals, formerly the greatest festival of giving to the Buddhist community, is now minimal. Beyond coordinating internationally-funded restorations of Svayambhū and of buildings in the Malla palace complexes in Bhaktapur and Patan, and outside of official tourist brochure rhetoric and diplomatic window dressing, the governments of modern Nepal have invested little to sustain the cultural vitality of Newar Buddhism.

“Religious Field” as Basis of Inquiry

The increasing pluralism among Buddhist groups supported by the Urāy argues for adopting the notion of “religious field” to analyze modern religious change. For Newar Buddhists, Tibetan *lamas* Theravādin *bhikṣus* have added to have vitality of Buddhism in their country and, in part, they have shifted their patronage away from the Vajrācāryas to them. One measure of the latter’s success is that *Vipassana* meditation popularised by S.N. Goenka is now a practice widely known and done in Urāy families. My research has clearly indicated that for Urāy of all sorts, Buddhism has remained a meaningful source of world view and identity.

The Urāy attitude to their “venerable old traditions” moves paradoxically in two opposing directions. Although the Vajrācāryas have in most cases lost the ability to inspire spiritual respect among the Urāy, and as Newar Buddhist culture is no longer solely dominated by *vajrayāna* Buddhism, many Urāy have viewed this development with considerable indifference. As good lay Buddhists, they seek *punya* and proficient, spiritually-endowed ritualists; few Vajrācāryas can today claim such special status. The Urāy

also increasingly seek to have Buddhist doctrine connect with their experience of the modern world, and few Vajrācāryas are capable of articulating such a position based upon Mahāyāna-Vajrayāna philosophy.

In business and so in the religious life, a merchant should not make bad investments or act without careful analytical understanding; to do so is to harvest an inferior return on one's *dāna*. Thus, as the major Newar patron group and the former pillars of local Mahāyāna traditions, modern Urāy have continually cut back upon their material support to the Vajrācārya *saṃgha* and their institutions, as many have also withdrawn their engagement with Mahāyāna philosophy. The Urāy's diminished *dāna*, the decline of Newar "*gurujus*" as learned and spiritual "*gurus*", the near end of royal patronage, and the little state protection afforded to the Newar *vihāra*'s former land endowments have all contributed to this decline.

That Newar Buddhism survives at all in 1995 is due to a stubborn conservatism based upon the community's positive attitude to its cultural past. Respecting the elders' attachment to past practices still compels most Urāy families to resist final abandonment of the long-established customs that require the family Vajrācārya's ritual performances. This conservation ethos has also been buttressed by numerous modern books and periodicals written by Buddhist intellectuals—Vajrācāryas, Śākyas, Urāy, and others—who have in varying ways argued for the value of Newar culture.

In fact, there has been considerable vitality shown in the textual domain of older Mahāyāna culture over the past 15 years. Some patrons and intellectuals not drawn into the Tibetan or Theravadin orbits have even been supporters of the recent surge of newly-published Newari translations of Mahāyāna *sūtras*, of a school in Kathmandu set up by Badri Bajrācārya to train young Vajrācāryas, and of organizations dedicated to the continuation of Newari literature and script study. Thus, these attempts at revival indicate that a considerable commitment to the older culture remains. Urāy also express a widespread view that their old traditions' have worth and that their indigenous Buddhism remains at the center of their identity vis-à-vis other Newars and other Nepalis.

Religion, Breakdown, and Change in Modern Nepal

In the past, the Urāy were a key group that maintained the indigenous Newar Buddhist traditions. In many ways they held the culture together through their patronage and leadership. Formerly, the characteristic way to spend excess wealth was through the conspicuous patronage traditions. Nowadays, there are many new ways to spend this wealth, especially on luxuries imported from the world outside Nepal: automobiles, motorcycles, stereos, cameras, video players, satellite televisions, and other household

furnishings. Religious institutions now get a much diminished percentage of the rich class's largess, and some of the richer Uṛāy have also been the first to adopt new innovations and "drop out" of the normal agenda of the traditional lifestyle. This group's increasingly individualized, more private lifestyle signals the wider societal pattern: less time and resources will further diminish the older cultural traditions that they Uṛāy as an elite class once championed.

The future of any religion cannot be divorced from its larger socio-political context. Thus, Newars in Kathmandu must contend directly with the nation's failure to develop its rural economy, urban infrastructure, and educational systems. Migration from the hills and industrial pollution within the Valley have recently accelerated the rapid deterioration of Kathmandu's urban ecology. The precipitous decline in city water supply, air quality, sanitation, and public transportation are problems faced by all living in Kathmandu. Further, the call for identification with the new programs of the political parties in many instances conflicts with the older norm of loyalty to Newar Buddhist culture. (Prominent examples include Marxist atheism versus Buddhist devotion or the communist ideal of a classless society versus the predominant high-caste leadership of these parties.) It is still unclear how the young will identify with their "venerable traditions", given their country's stagnation, the appeals of new political movements, and the attraction of global mass media in terms of it siphoning off of surplus time and excess wealth.

Conclusion

Since the beginning of Buddhism and throughout its subsequent Asian history, merchants have played a decisive role in sustaining the faith as patrons, exponents, and community leaders. As the leading Uṛāy subcaste's name suggests, the Tilādhars "hold the scales" that regulate commercial transactions in Kathmandu's major markets. Today, as the Vajrācārya *saṃgha* competes for Buddhist standing with the *lamas* and *bhikṣus*, and as all religious institutions compete for the community's support against the lure of TV, multi-party politics, and the crises in Kathmandu's urban environment, the Uṛāy merchants must likewise weigh their needs, reassess their contributions, and determine the future of Buddhist tradition in Kathmandu.

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THE ECONOMICS OF BUDDHISM: AN ALTERNATIVE MODEL FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

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Today we are living in an era in which the capitalistic mode of production is replacing the production of the socialistic order. The result being the self-instinct of individual has again triumphed over his deep urge for collective thinking and collective way of doing things. Thus, the dynamics of group development has definitely received a major set-back. Even in the slow-developing economy like that of Nepal the market-economy has attained its new height; and the concept of privatisation has been responsible for the transfer of even profit-marking government controlled industries into the private sector. The Nepal experience of privatisation of the past three years has taught us two important lessons:

First, privatisation does not necessarily lead to greater competition. The state monopoly is simply converted into private monopoly and all the evils of the pooling or the cartel system not only persists but attains new dimensions;

Second, privatisation is having a regressive impact on the distribution of income of the individual and the wealth of the nation.

The burning problem that is being left by the concept of privatisation is that who is going to look after the interest of the weak, the aged and those who are socially and physically handicapped, or to put it in a different perspective who is going to deal with the social and economic costs resulting from polluted environment, specially water and air. The Kathmandu Valley experience shows that the private sector is both unwilling and illsuited to resolve the problem of the cleaning of the environment.

Thus, the insertion of the socialistic provisions into the national economy has become more imperative today than ever before. As early as the close of the eighteenth century the utopian social prophet like Charles Fourier (1772-1837) was convinced that man's destruction of the environment has reached catastrophic proportion in his own time.¹ Today as many of our cities have become unlivable; this trend seems now almost irreversible.

The Economics of Buddhism

This paper intends to seek an alternative model for development in the light of Buddhist teachings and practices and can be safely labelled as "The Economics of Buddhism" as opposed to conventional economics founded by Adam Smith (1732-1790) and further developed by his jealous successors like Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832).² Buddha's teachings are based upon pure reasoning and rational thinking. He being a pragmatic person does not dabble in philosophy as he argued that "philosophy purifies none", while "peace does". He saw that all was suffering and found a way to remove that suffering by eliminating its cause that is, *abidyā* (ignorance). To remove ignorance Buddha founded the doctrine of *pratītyasamutpāda*. Every increase in wants leads to a decrease in happiness and vice versa. *Nirvāṇ* (the state of bliss) is a point where the barometer of desires drops to zero. Buddha compares *nirvāṇ* to a raft, which enables us to ferry the stormy waters of birth and death. But once we reach the other shore it is something to be discarded and left behind. In short, it is not an end but means to an end.

On the whole Buddha took pains to demonstrate in his teachings two purposes in life: first, to conduct one's life for the attainment of one's own happiness, and second, to direct one's effort for the welfare of the community to which one belongs. The notion of community welfare is further developed by the emergence of the concept of the *Bodhisattva* in the Mahayana Buddhism. A *Bodhisattva* is person who has attained the state of *nirvāṇ* or in other words, he can attain salvation and moment but his attachment to the community to which he belongs prevents him from doing so. A *Bodhisattva* decides not to enter into the state of *nirvāṇ* until he has helped others in the community in the process of doing so.³ Buddha's teachings as expressed in the *Dhammapada* (23) state that "hunger is the greatest disease and the rulers must devise means to eradicate it." This was to be done by raising the living standard of the people (the masses). It is on this concept Buddha founded his logic of mass-thinking, built mass-organisation (the *sangha*) and developed a mass-culture. This has become a corner stone of modern political-economy. In the orient Buddhism has been

a vehicle of cultural expression in moral, material, economic, and spiritual forms as Christianity has been in the occident.

Buddha's appeal to modern intelligentsia is due to two factors: first, he was able to analyze human well being in terms of material and economic conditions, and second, he goes beyond man's physical needs and gives a penetrating analysis of the psychological state of the human mind, which has to be catered in a different way. The way to meet the physical and psychological needs of man is to follow the "right livelihood", the fifth element in one's effort towards the "*nirvāna* in Buddha's *stanzas* merge (eight fold path).⁴ It is to be remembered that on the positive side "right livelihood" is the outcome of right action, while speaking from the negative plane "right livelihood" means refraining from actions that cause suffering to others. Thus, material and psychological well-being of man can be sought by following Buddha's percept of "right livelihood."

Buddhist Economic Thought and Conventional Economics

Professor John Hicks defines economic system in two ways: first, as an association of producers to satisfy the wants or the needs of the customers, and secondly, as a system of mutual exchanges.⁵ The two definitions of economics are not alternative but rather a complimentary way of looking at any given economic system. The conventional economists have always viewed economic development as virtually synonymous with the growth of per capita. The result was development was conceived solely in terms of economic goals, that is, increase in gross domestic product (GDP),⁶ investments, consumption pattern and the overall rise in the living standard of the people. It is also needless to say that the conventional economics believes in a market-system. This is, in other words *laissez-faire* economy where millions of consumers and producers acting individually through the market not only respond to price changes but also determine what should be produced, and how each should benefit.⁷ However, Buddhist economics revolves over the concept of simplicity and "right livelihood" Thus high living standard is not the same as a high level of consumption. So community development is possible without economic growth for development has other components: social, cultural, political, environmental and above all the tranquil state of mind of the people dwelling in any society at any given time. So development, which has physical and mental dimensions, does not start with goods rather people their education, organisation, and discipline. It was the Buddhist monasteries and the *sangha* that aided in the process of mental and physical development of the society as well as the individual. The monasteries and the *sangha* were not only the seats of culture in South Asia but catered to the physical

and cultural well-being of the laity and the community at large. The economic aspect of Buddhism maximises the total well-being of the community, which includes the cultural, social and the environmental factors, with minimum level of consumption. Thus, from the Buddhist economic perspective, a higher consumption can pose a risk to the pursuit of human happiness; and it is detrimental to the welfare of the community at large. So today a time has come when we can fall back to the Buddhist economic model for community development. This would save a society from social devastation of an uncontrolled system of the market economy.⁸ Therefore, today we can use the Buddhist economic thought to promote community development. The Buddhist *suttas* demonstrate beyond doubt the intimate correlation between the individual development and the progress of the community at large. They analyze to the minute details the human well-being in material and economic terms both of which ultimately lead to the psychological well-being of the individual and the society as a whole. Buddha labels this psychological state of mind as *nirvāna* or eternal bliss.

The Problem of the Present

The basic problem of man today is to devise ways and means so to use the nations scarce resources and productive powers for the progress and enlargement of goods and services, and thereby fulfil human needs which are partly individual and partly societal. Today economists lay emphasis on capital formation, growth oriented education and an efficient application of scientific knowledge and technology. Above all, it includes a revolutionary change in the outlook of the masses and elites so that they can subordinate their wants of the present to the needs of tomorrow.⁹ This paves the way for the rise of the notion of sustainable development. It was in April 1987 the World Commission on Environment issued a report "Our Common Future" the theme in this report consists of sustainable development, which it defines as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of the future generations to meet their own needs." (WCED 1987)

- (a) First, the art of living on the income of this earth without exhausting nature's capital.
- (b) Second, the ability of meeting the requirements of the present generation without compromising the needs of our children in the future to meet their needs.
- (c) Third, the knack of managing the natural, human and financial resources so as to accelerate human resources and well-being.

Sustainable development therefore on the negative side advocates a process of change that does not increase poverty, degrade the environment, and leave the future generation worse off than at present. But on the positive side sustainable development denotes a process of change in which the exploitation of resources, the direction of investments, and the orientation of technological development on the institutional changes are made in consistent with man's present and future needs (WCED, 1987).

Conclusion

Hence the understanding of the economics of Buddhism becomes more important today than ever before, because Buddhism directly addresses to the fundamental concept of human life and its inter-relation with the community at large in a holistic way. In South Asia, specially in India and Sri Lanka two movements the *Sarvodaya* movement and the *Bhūdan* movement associated with Acharya Binova Bhawe and Jaya Prakash Narayan are very much rooted in the Buddhist economic thought. Both the movements above every thing else do recognise the towering importance of the individual happiness and the community welfare as a useful basis of peaceful change as the first and the foremost requirement for the long term human survival.

Thus, the Western model of economic development like the "basic-need-bundle or basket" the "regional-planning-approach" or the integrated-development-strategy¹⁰ can become meaningless for a developing country like Nepal that is not only "tradition-bound" but also "religion bound" unless it can be tied up within the socio-cultural setting operating the general framework of religion; and Buddhism with its secular orientation in its economic thought serves as a perfect model for community development.

Notes

1. For more on Fourier and the Environment see Jonathan Beecher and Richard Bienvvenu, *The Utopian of Vision of Charles Fourier* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1975), pp. 73-75.
2. For prophets of capitalism see Adam Smith, *Wealth of Nations*, ed. by Edwin Cannon (London: Macmillan and Co., 1932); also Overtone H. Taylor, *A History of Economic Thought* (London: Macmillan and Co., pp. 20-30.)
3. More on Buddha's teachings see PV Bhopal (ed), *2500 Hundred Hundred Years of Buddhism* (New Delhi: Publication Division, Govt. of India, 1959), pp. 20-34; M. Hariyana, *Outlines of India Philosophy* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1958), pp. 123-154; Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan and Charles A. Moore, *A Source Book in Indian*

- Philosophy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970), pp. 272-355.
4. A detailed account of the Buddha's *astāṅga mārga* is seen in Satishchandra Chatterjee and D. Datta, *An Introduction to Indian Philosophy* (Calcutta: Calcutta University, 1960), pp. 115-137.
 5. John R. Hicks, *The Social Framework* (London: Clarendon Press, 1971), pp. 24-25.
 6. GDP informs us of the total quantity of goods and services available to a community in a particular period.
 7. John Hicks, *The Social Framework op. cit.*, p. 42.
 8. More on the market economy see, Karl Polany, *The Great Transformation* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1971), pp. 33-209.
 9. See Joseph Sponger, "Theory, Ideology, Non-Economic Values and politico-Economic Development" in Ralph Brabanti, J. Spengler, *Traditions, Values, and Socio-Economic Development* (London: Duke University, 1961) pp. 10-12
 10. For more on the Western models of development see Kemple Ronald Hope, *The Dynamics of Development Administration* (London: Greenwood press, 1984). pp. 2-30; P.W. preston, *Theories of Development* (London: Routledge, & Kegan Paul, 1982). pp. 187-215; Robert Patter, *Urbanisation and planning in the 3rd World and Public Participation* (London: George Helm), pp. 1-32; Geoge F. Grant, *Development Administration: Concepts, Goals and Methods* (Madison: Wisconsin University Press), pp. 160-180.

A SKETCH OF THE HISTORY OF LALITPUR (PATAN) WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO BUDDHISM

David N. Gellner

Dhanavajra Vajracharya was a great historian of Nepal. This article is dedicated to his memory by an anthropologist who could only marvel at Dhanavajra's scholarship and epigraphical skills. In so far as it presents historical materials, this paper is a humble synthesis based entirely on secondary sources, and by no means exhausts these. I had the good fortune to meet briefly with Dhanavajra in his home in September 1992 and receive his guidance on a small aspect of the present text (see below, footnote 23).¹ In a larger sense, all those who work on the culture and history of Nepal are in Dhanavajra's debt. In particular, those who work on the Kathmandu Valley must hope that his *Mallakālin Abhilekh*, so long unpublished, will finally see the light of day. The interpretations and suggestions offered below will certainly need revision when it does, as well as in the light of further study of both published and unpublished primary materials from the Malla period.

Introduction: Lalitpur's Three Names

The city of Lalitpur is today known by three equally common names: Patan, Lalitpur, and Yala. An investigation of these three will take us far into both the history and the mythology of the city.

'Pāṭan' is the name used by Nepali-speakers, except in formal contexts, and the name by which the city has become known to most foreigners and in English. 'Lalitpur' is the formal name of the city preferred by its own inhabitants and official name both of the city and of the district of which it is part. 'Lalitpur' means 'beautiful city', and this, or variants with the same meaning, such as Lalitapattana, Lalitakramā, or Lalitabrumā, was its formal name in the Malla period. 'Pāṭan', the Nepali name, is an abbreviation of 'Lalitapattana'. 'Yala', usually pronounced 'Yelay', is what the city is called by Newars, especially by the inhabitants of the city themselves. It is probably the Newari form of 'Yūpagrāma', meaning 'village of the sacred

pillar'. In the Licchavi period this was the name of the largest of the villages that were later to coalesce into the city of Lalitpur; Yūpagrāma included what is now Mangah, Lalitpur's central area (Slusser 1982:97). Local people, in so far as they give an explanation of the name 'Yala' at all, say rather that it derives from a Kirati king called Yalambar.

Before proceeding to examine what we know of the history of Lalitpur, let us consider first the myths and stories told by local people and found in their historical chronicles (*vamśāvalī*). These stories mostly account for the origin of some aspect of the city, or in one case of the city as a whole. It is important to emphasize that there are a considerable number of such traditions, and they are not synthesized or coordinated in a systematic fashion. The point is that they explain the existence of a local holy site or legitimate a particular local custom, ritual, or festival. Although these stories may possibly also preserve a kernel of historical truth, it is in their relationship to present-day monuments and activities that their greatest significance lies.

Local Myths

The main foundation myth: King Bir Deva and Lalita Jyāpu

All the late chronicles, dating from the nineteenth century, ascribe the foundation of Lalitpur as a city to a king called Bir (Vīra) Deva, the father of King Narendra Deva who brought the famous god Karuṇāmaya-Matsyendranāth to Nepal from Assam.² In actual fact, although Narendra Deva certainly did exist, as did his Buddhist preceptor Bandhudatta Acārya who, according to the legends, helped to bring Karuṇāmaya to Nepal, King Bir Deva is a fabrication of the myths. The stories about Narendra Deva, Bandhudatta, and Rathācakra Jyāpu bringing Karuṇāmaya to Lalitpur probably grew up around a real event: the establishment of Karuṇāmaya's annual chariot festival at some point between 644 and 680 C.E. by King Narendra Deva, who was described by a Chinese ambassador as wearing a Buddha on his belt (Locke 1980:297). Since the cult of Karuṇāmaya-Matsendranāth is so important to the city of Lalitpur, it can be understood why the chronicles postulated that the city itself had been founded in the generation just before the cult's establishment. (In fact, although the cult has always been important to Lalitpur, the divinity only began to spend half the year in the city of Lalitpur itself some time in the seventeenth century, as discussed below.)

There are several accounts of Bir Deva's foundation. Here, in translation from the Nepali, is one of the fullest of them (Lamshal 1966: 1-3, Ms. ka):

[Next came] his son, King Śrī Bir Deva, who ruled for sixteen years.
He consulted Brahmans, astrologers, and Buddhist *ācāryas*, and

instructed his obedient subjects that he was extremely intent on founding several cities. In this connection he used to perform regular devotions to the supreme lord Sarveśvara [i.e. the shrine of Śiva called Kumbheśvar, in the northern part of present Lalitpur].

The king used to sit at the window of his palace, and he regularly saw a leprous grasscutter going to cut grass. One day he was astonished to see that very grasscutter going by with his leprosy all cured and looking very handsome. So he asked him how it was that he now looked so well, and the grasscutter, who was called Lalita, replied: "Great King! Yesterday I went to the southern side of the Bagmati river into the Lalita wood in order to cut grass. I became hot and went to a place where there was a pond, took off my clothes, stuck my carrying pole into the ground, and went to bathe. When I came out of the water my leprosy was all gone. The carrying pole was stuck and I could not pull it out. I thought it must be *siddha* (instantly established as a god)." The king was happy to hear this and said: "Show me this place."

He showed the king the place, and the king returned to his palace. Since Lalita had been entirely cured of leprosy through the Lord's compassion, even though he was a grass-cutter the king made him his minister. Still today, the carrying stick which became *siddha* can be seen at a place called Jhyatāpol to the south of Kumbheśvar.

Being devoted to Sarveśvara, the king had it in mind to establish a city, and some time later Sarveśvara appeared to him in dream. He said: "Oh King! To make the city, cut down Lalita wood. [Design it] in accordance with the 24 elements (*tattva*) and in the shape of a *śrī yantra* [i.e., a mandala], and make your minister Lalita the architect (*arkhatayārī*). Establish our three self-existent *śivaliṅgas*³ within the city. You too will be saved (*uddhār*)."

Thus in the bright half of the month of Phālgun, in the year of Kaligat era [blank],⁴ at the auspicious moment the minister Lalita inaugurated the building of the new city in accordance with the king's command. In this way the king spent much wealth. He made 24 *tol* [localities, *twāḥ*] representing the 24 elements, and established water fountains, wells, ponds, gods and goddesses. Since it was extremely beautiful, he called it Lalitapattana, and he made it into a city by joining it up with Matiligrāma.

He established the following goddesses [outside the city]: Bāl Kumārī in the east, Thachē Mahālakṣmī in the south, Kasūti Kumār in the south-east, Yappā Vaiṣṇavī in the west, Nyekhukwā Rudrāyaṇī

in the west, Lohagal Indrāyaṇī in the north-west, Dhātīla Vārāhī in the north, and Sikabāhī Cāmuṇḍā in the north.⁵

This king left Śikharāpur palace and came to live in the Lalitapattana palace. Being called Lalita, and made famous under that name, the resting house called Lalitapur to the south of Kumbheśvar is still there today. In this king's time chariots were made for the following gods and the custom was established of having the people celebrate their festivals in the various localities of Lalitpattana from Baisākh śukla 11 until the full moon: Matilinagar's Mīnāth-Jaṭadhārī Lokeśvara, Dhālākṣa's Lokanāth, Matilinagar's Baṭuk Bhairav, Sātha's Nārāyaṇa, Cālākṣe's Hariśaṅkar, Kolima's [Kulimha's] Maheśvara.⁶

The main elements of this story are known to most people in Lalitpur. The carrying stick of the peasant (Jyāpu) Lalita is still pointed out, a tall, leaning stone column in Jhyatāpaḥ *twāḥ* [1] (see map). Opposite it there is indeed a long, ancient, two-storeyed *sattaḥ* known locally as Laltāpur.⁷ According to Wright's chronicle Bir Deva placed 330 million gods in this *dharmaśālā*, "passed the rest of his life worshipping [them], and then obtained salvation." Some say, however, that the carrying stick of Lalita is the much shorter column inside the small temple-like structure built over the spring inside the compound of the Kumbheśvar temple [3]. The fact that the foundation story focuses on the site of the Kumbheśvar temple [4] is a reflection of the ancientness of the general area, which is rich in Licchavi-period remains, and also a reflection of the fact that Kumbheśvar is the biggest and most important Śiva temple in the city.

The idea that the city should consist of twenty-four *twāḥ* persisted but is not so generally accepted or as important as in Bhaktapur. Many accounts say that Lalitpur has 24,000 houses, which is very likely an ideal number reflecting the importance of the number 24 (e.g., A. K. Vajracharya 1982:87). In 1717 leaders of each of the 24 *twāḥ* went to welcome the new king, Mahindra Simha, from Kathmandu (D. Vajracharya and T. Shrestha 1978:191).

Rathācakra Jyāpu and the Bringing of Karuṇāmaya

As noted above, the cult of Karuṇāmaya-Matsyendranāth is of particular importance to the city of Lalitpur. Of the three mythological figures who brought him there, the king, Narendra Deva, is supposed to have been from Bhaktapur, the Buddhist priest, Bandhudatta, from Kathmandu, and the humble porter, Rathācakra Jyāpu, from Lalitpur. None the less, by a kind of trick, the divinity ended up in Lalitpur.⁸

There is in the popular mind an assimilation of the two peasant figures, Rathācakra and Lalita (e.g., Locke 1980:248, 252), the former responsible for bringing Karuṇāmaya to the city, the latter for founding the city itself. The founding of the city and the establishment of its most important god are thereby assimilated. As Toffin (1993: 119-22) has pointed out in a recent analysis, Newar, and indeed Asian, cities frequently begin, in myths at least, with the establishment of a presiding deity: in the mythical, Hindu version, this is Kumbheśvar whose importance in the daily lives of most of the city's inhabitants is certainly less than that of Karuṇāmaya. In fact, as mentioned already, during the Licchavi period when Narendra Deva probably inaugurated Karuṇāmaya's festival, Lalitpur as such did not yet exist. But it is certainly possible that the establishment of the festival was part of the process by which the older settlements grew into an important city.

Associations with the Kirāti kings

Lalitpur has more associations with the pre-Licchavi, and pre-historical, Kirati period than either Bhaktapur or Kathmandu. There is a mound in Patuko *twāḥ* known to locals as 'the palace of the Kiratis' [5]. It is sited at a crossroads one block north and east of the present palace: could it have had some ritual, or even political, significance in the pre-Licchavi period? Archaeological excavations at this site might reveal much about the early history of the city.

The myths of origin of Kwā Bāhāḥ [6] refer to oppression by supposedly anti-Buddhist Kiratis. The god of Kwā Bāhāḥ instructed the young priest to throw boiled rice at the crossroads of Kwālakhu, just north of the so-called Kirati Darbar; this turned into hundreds of bees which chased the Kiratis away to Cyāsaḥ *twāḥ* [7] where eight hundred (*cyā saḥ*) of them died (hence the name). The survivors, the story concludes, became the present-day Vyañjankār (Tepay) caste, who live in Cyāsaḥ.

Apparently there are still further connections with Kiratis, in that still today some Kiratis (i.e., Rais and Limbus) worship at temples in Lalitpur (Slusser 1982:96). The (relatively weak) tradition that the city's name 'Yala' derives from that of a famous Kirati king, Yalambar, has already been noted. Wright's chronicle (1972:109) makes him the first of the Kirati kings; but it also says that the Kiratis did not come to Lalitpur until the twenty-eighth king, Patuka, was forced to move his palace from Gokarna to Patuko (ibid.:112).

The Visits of Lord Buddha and Emperor Aśoka

The chronicles include mentions of putative visits by both Sākyamuni Buddha and the Emperor Aśoka to the Kathmandu Valley. It is highly

unlikely that either ever came there. Most make no specific connection with Lalitpur, although Padmagiri's chronicle (Hasrat 1970:21) does say that shortly afterwards Buddhists and Śaivites (followers of Lord Śiva) became distinguished from each other, and "the cities of Devapatan, Kantipur [Kathmandu], Lalitpur and Bhaktapur were built and peopled." Some claim that the city's circular shape is meant to recall the Buddha's wheel of the Dharma (Oldfield 1981 1:117), but this is not found in local sources, to the best of my knowledge.

Although Aśoka is not supposed to have visited Lalitpur, which even on the chronicles' account did not yet exist, he is thought to have constructed the four large *stūpas* which exist in each of the four directions of Lalitpur, three outside the city boundaries, the northern one just inside it. Although no documentary evidence supports it, their shape is certainly very archaic. Aśoka is also credited with establishing the numerous Licchavi-period *caityas* which are known locally as *aśokacaitya*. It is said that he left in hurry, before he had time to establish Buddhas in the niches, which is why they are so often empty.

King Sarvānanda and Guita Twāḥ

In the first world age, the Satya Yuga, a king called Sarvānanda gave alms that he had earned by his own effort as a blacksmith's apprentice to the Buddha Dīpaṅkara. His city, known as Dīpavatī, is supposed to be on the site of present-day Guita [8]. Sarvānanda's alms-giving is celebrated every year in Lalitpur with the festival of Pañcadān during the Buddhist holy month of Gūlā. Alms are given to Śākya and Vajrācārya men and to children of both sexes who circulate from monastery to monastery and house to house.

The Creation of Mangal (Mangal Bazaar) [9]

According to Wright's chronicle, Bir Deva established the various gods and a royal palace at the centre of the city:

... he built a chaitya and a dhārā [water fountain], and erected a Sivaling, a Ganesha, a Mahākāla, and a Mandapa, and built a Durbār for the Rāja, all of which he consecrated. Being a devotee of Mani Joginī, he named all these after that goddess as follows: Mani-talāva [i.e., Taleju in the royal palace], Mani-chaitya, Mani-dhārā, Manilinga, Mani-Ganesha, Mani-Kumāra, Mani-Mahākāla, Mani-Mandapa, and Mani-gal-bhatta. (Wright 1972:136)

This is intended as an explanation of the name for the centre of the city.⁹

The History of Lalitpur

The Licchavi Period (5th-9th centuries)

Lalitpur is certainly one of the oldest inhabited areas of the Kathmandu Valley. We know this because of the abundance of remains, including inscriptions, Buddhist *caityas*, and sculptures, to be found there. There were three villages connected by an irrigation channel called Thāmbū, Gāṇśul, and Mūlavāṭikā (D. Vajracharya 1973:401-4). Near the present Sundhārā/Lūhitī [10] was a village called Mātiṇ where in 610 C.E. Aṁśuvarman rebuilt a crumbling temple and turned land that had previously been property of the crown over to the local corporate group (*pāñcālī*) for the temple's future upkeep (ibid.:339-41; Sharma 1983:32). The present locality of Guita was included in a village called Gullamṭaṅga (of which 'Guita' is surely the abbreviated form). In 679 King Narendradeva assigned it and its lands to the upkeep of Śivadeva Vihāra (Buddhist monastery).¹⁰ What is now Su Bāhāḥ *twāḥ* [11] was probably part of this village. Another village may well have been sited in what is now Cyāsaḥ *twāḥ*, since there are many Licchavi remains there also. The main areas of Licchavi settlement seem therefore to have been what are now the north, east, and south quadrants of the city. In subsequent centuries, as these villages began to form one city, the settlement spread westwards.

Largest of all in the Licchavi period was the settlement known as Yūpagrāma (Yūpa village). This seems to have stretched from present-day Mangaḥ as far south as Tangaḥ Bāhāḥ [12]. It is likely that the Newari name of Lalitpur, Yala, comes from *yalasī*, now usually pronounced *yasī*, the name of the tall poles erected during various festivals, but particularly during Yēnyāḥ (Indra Jātrā). The Sanskrit *yūpa* refers to the sacrificial pole used during Vedic rituals, but could also be used for the poles erected in honour of Indra. 'Yūpagrāma' would then be an honorific and Sanskritized version of the local name. By 724 C.E. at the end of the Licchavi period, Yūpagrāma, like the settlement of Dakṣiṇakoliḡrāma in the southern part of what is now Kathmandu, had been raised from the status of a village to that of town (*draṅga*) because of its flourishing commerce (D. Vajracharya 1987:360). At this time the town was divided into several sections (*pāñcālī*). Some of their names are known: Gigvala, Jajje, Tegvala, and Yūgvala. Tegvala is the present-day Tangal. However, it now seems clear that, contrary to what some earlier historians believed, the capital of the Kathmandu valley in the Licchavi period was never in Lalitpur, but rather in Hadigaon, or, according to some, in Kathmandu.

The kings of the Licchavi period supported both Hinduism and Buddhism. Up till Aṁśuvarman, Vaiṣṇavism was the favoured court cult, thereafter

Śaivism. But Buddhism was always important, as can be clearly seen from Aṃśuvarman's Hadigaon inscription of 608. In this the important deities and personages of the kingdom are listed with the tribute due to each (table 1).

We do not know just how this tax, called the *śrāvaṇikā*, was paid. Presumably it would have been impossible for every household to pay such amounts to all these different recipients (Sharma 1983:46-7). What the inscription does tell us is that two parallel hierarchies were envisaged, one of gods and the other of men. What significance can be given to Brahmans being ranked so low in this particular revenue hierarchy is unclear, since they certainly were given high honour by the Licchavi kings, who described themselves as supporters of the caste system (*varṇāśrama-vyavasthā*). For present purposes what is really important is that the highest spiritual rank is given to two Hindu temples, Paśupati and Cāngu Nārāyaṇ, listed first, and to five Buddhist monasteries. In the second rank come all other Buddhist monasteries and ten Hindu temples (the five ending with '-eśvara' can be assumed to be Śiva temples). It is evident that Buddhism was of great importance at this time.

Four of these five top-ranking monasteries were situated in what is now Lalitpur, showing that the association of Lalitpur with Buddhism is very old. The fifth, Gū Vihāra, was at Vajrayoginī in Sankhu, a site still known by that name. Other lesser monasteries in Lalitpur were Abhayaruci Vihāra, Caturbhāṭasana Vihāra, and Vārtakalyāṇagupta Vihāra (D. Vajracharya 1973:505). Of all these monasteries in Lalitpur, only one has a tenuous connection to a currently existing institution. Cuka Bāhāh [13] in the south of the city has as its formal name, Mānadeva-saṃskārita-Cakra-mahāvihāra, that is, the Cakra great monastery founded by Mānadeva. Wright's chronicle, which was written in Lalitpur, records the tradition that Mānadeva abdicated in favour of his son and become a monk in the monastery he had founded. However, no ancient remains at the present site confirm these accounts (Locke 1985:135).

The Thakuri or Transitional Period (c. 879-1200) and the early Malla period (1200-1382)

The first time that we come across a form of the modern honorific name for the city is in 920 C.E., when it occurs as Lalitabrumā (Pétech 1984:31). Thereafter it occurs frequently in inscriptions and in the colophons to manuscripts as Lalitabrumā, Lalitakramā, Lalitapur, Lalitapurī, or Lalitapattana. In ordinary speech we can be fairly sure that, then as now, the city was known as Yala, since it is almost always referred to as in the Gopāla Rāja chronicle Yahra written at the end of the fourteenth century.

**Table 1: Recipients of taxes in Aṃśuvarman's
Hadigaon inscription of 608.**

Paśupati	6 <i>purāṇa</i> 2 <i>pana</i>
Dolaśikharasvāmī [= Cāngu Nārāyaṇ]	6 <i>purāṇa</i> 2 <i>pana</i>
Gum Vihāra	6 <i>purāṇa</i> 2 <i>pana</i>
Śrī Māna Vihāra	6 <i>purāṇa</i> 2 <i>pana</i>
Śrī Rāja Vihāra	6 <i>purāṇa</i> 2 <i>pana</i>
Kharjūrikā Vihāra	6 <i>purāṇa</i> 2 <i>pana</i>
Madhyama Vihāra	6 <i>purāṇa</i> 2 <i>pana</i>
other ordinary <i>vihāras</i>	3 <i>purāṇa</i> 1 <i>pana</i>
Rāmeśvara	3 <i>purāṇa</i> 1 <i>pana</i>
Haṃsagrha Deva	3 <i>purāṇa</i> 1 <i>pana</i>
Māneśvara	3 <i>purāṇa</i> 1 <i>pana</i>
Sāmbapur	3 <i>purāṇa</i> 1 <i>pana</i>
Vāgvatīpārikā Deva	3 <i>purāṇa</i> 1 <i>pana</i>
Dhārāmāneśvara	3 <i>purāṇa</i> 1 <i>pana</i>
Parvateśvara	3 <i>purāṇa</i> 1 <i>pana</i>
Narasimha Deva	3 <i>purāṇa</i> 1 <i>pana</i>
Kailāseśvara	3 <i>purāṇa</i> 1 <i>pana</i>
Bhumbhukkikā-jalaśayana [= Bhuijasi/Buḍhanīlkaṇṭha]	3 <i>purāṇa</i> 1 <i>pana</i>
other temples of the gods	2 <i>purāṇa</i> 2 <i>pana</i>
to the King	6 <i>purāṇa</i> 2 <i>pana</i>
to <i>sapelā pāñcālīs</i>	6 <i>purāṇa</i> 2 <i>pana</i>
ordinary <i>pāñcālīs</i>	3 <i>purāṇa</i> 1 <i>pana</i>
people supported by palace	2 <i>purāṇa</i> 2 <i>pana</i>
<i>goṣṭhikā</i> (<i>goṣṭhī</i> members)	2 <i>purāṇa</i> 2 <i>pana</i>
people supported by king's favour	1 <i>purāṇa</i>
Brahmans	1 <i>purāṇa</i>
ordinary people	[inscription not clear]

Source: D. Vajracharya 1973:320ff.

It was in the tenth and eleventh centuries that the centre of Lalitpur came to be called Mānigwala, or Mānigala, which today has become Mangaḥ or Mangal. The name probably comes from the old Newari meaning 'central place (*gvala*)' (Slusser 1982:111), and it is called "Lalitakramā's central *tolka* [*twāḥ*], Mānigwala" an inscription of 1114 (Petch 1984:53). This old meaning has been lost. The name is understood today either to mean *maṅgal*, an auspicious event, or to be a compound from *maṇi*-, jewel, as in the myth from Wright's chronicle quoted above.

The political history of this period is complicated and confusing. Power was much more decentralized than either before or after. The period after the Licchavi dynasty until 1200 is known as the Thakuri period because the late chronicles fill it with three Thakuri dynasties. Historically, the information they give is inaccurate, but the name has stuck. The dynastic links of the kings between 879 and 1200 are unclear. From 1200 to 1258 the early Malla dynasty ruled. Between 1258 and 1382 two separate dynasties, the Tipura and Bhonta families, based in Bhaktapur and Banepa respectively, shared power: sometimes they did so peacefully, alternately providing the king, at other times they fought each other and invited in outsiders when they were out of power. During this period of wars and invasions, Lalitpur provided the capital of the valley for some of the time, according to Petch (1984:67, 188). Throughout the period it was important for those aspiring to power to hold Lalitpur's royal palace, Manigala, and they fought over it frequently.

Buddhism remained significant in Lalitpur. A large number of Buddhist manuscripts were copied there throughout this period, when other historical sources are scarce. One of the most important monasteries of this period was Uku Bāhāḥ, in the south-east of the city [14]. Formally it is known as Śivadeva-saṃskārita-Rudravārṇa-mahāvihāra, that is, the great Rudravārṇa monastery built by (or renovated by) King Śivadeva. Historians disagree whether this is the Licchavi king Śivadeva, who reigned 590-604 and is known to have founded monasteries, or the Thakuri period Śivadeva who reigned from 1098 to 1126 (Loṅke 1985:95; Kölver and Śākya 1985:14). It was noted above that Narendra Deva assigned lands in Guita to support a Śivadeva monastery in 679, but it is more likely that this monastery was in the environs of Paśupati (D. Vajracharya 1973:503). In any case Lalitpur's Uku Bāhāḥ was certainly flourishing on the present site by the eleventh century. For many centuries the monastery was known honorifically as the Rudravārṇa monastery, rather than the present Rudravārṇa moastery.¹¹ The name probably came from a local nobleman called Rudra Varman who made endowments to the monastery in 1065 (Kölver and Śākya 1985:14).

Other monasteries that we know to have existed already in the Thakuri and early Malla periods are Su Bāhāḥ, known then as Sālako Vihāra, and Ha Bāhāḥ, then known as Hatako Vihāra. At this time, Ha Bāhāḥ was probably located on the site of the southernmost courtyard of the royal palace, Sundarī Cok, built by King Siddhi Narasiṃha in 1647. The tradition that the monastery was moved to enable the palace to be expanded is well attested.¹² Two monasteries to the south of the city probably also existed at this time: Tanga Bāhāḥ [12] and Ta Bāhāḥ [17]. Tangal *twāḥ*, as noted above, is an old one. The Sanskrit name of Tanga Bāhāḥ, Jyeṣṭhavarṇa-mahāvihāra (*jyeṣṭha* means 'first-born'), is an indication of its seniority, which was acknowledged in the later Malla period. The first inscriptional evidence for Tanga Bāhāḥ comes from 1135. The site of Ta Bāhāḥ is possibly equally old, though it seems likely that the present membership came from elsewhere in the seventeenth century. Finally Kwā Bāhāḥ [6], the monastery with the largest membership today, may date from this period. Although the earliest inscriptional evidence dates only from 1399, a strong local tradition claims that it was founded by Bhāskara Deva; he reigned from 1045-7. The Thaku Juju ('Thakuri King') family, living in the nearby Nhū Bāhāḥ [18], are believed to be the descendants of the founder, and they still fulfil the important ritual role of sponsor for initiations in the monastery and for the five-yearly festival of Samyak. It is possible that at this early period Kwā Bāhāḥ was known as Yā Bāhāḥ; Wright's chronicle makes a reference to Yā Bāhāḥ (1972:237), and still today the members of Kwā Bāhāḥ are known colloquially, not as one might expect as *kwābāhāsā*, but as *yambāhāsā*.

Buddhism was of such importance in Lalitpur that the two halves of the city were occasionally called 'Northern Monastery' (*uttara vihāra*) and 'Southern Monastery' (*dakṣiṇ vihāra*).¹³ However, the greatest centre of Buddhism at this period seems not to have been Lalitpur but Svayambhū. It was there and at the famous Thā Bahī in Kathmandu, founded or reformed by Atīśa, that he and Dharmasvāmin stayed in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. The only other site mentioned in their biographies is the monastery of Būgadyaḥ (Karunāmaya) in Būga (Bungamati) (Petech 1984:41-3; Locke 1980:300; Locke 1980:410-12). There is also a reference to Sanskrit grammar and logic being taught to Tibetan Buddhists in Lalitpur (Roerich 1976:447); among several Nepalese *paṇḍits* mentioned in *The Blue Annals* was one Mahākaraṇā, "the great upāsaka [layman] of Ye-raṇ [Lalitpur]" (ibid.:361; cf. 382, 384).

The later Malla period (1382-1768)

In 1382 Sthiti Malla became king, consolidating formally the supreme power he had held for some time. Under him, and under his grandson, Yakṣa

Malla, who reigned from 1428 to 1482, Nepal was unified and generally peaceful. During this time the capital was in Bhaktapur, but both Kathmandu and Lalitpur were kept up as royal centres too. After Yakṣa Maḷa the kingdom was divided, as had often happened before, between the king's sons. From 1516 (Petech 1984:182) until 1597 Lalitpur was effectively independent of the Mallas and was ruled by the important noblemen of the town, especially Viṣṇu Siṃha (1546-56) and his son, Purandara Siṃha (1560-97). In 1597 King Śiva Siṃha of Kathmandu conquered Lalitpur, but after his death in 1619 his domain was divided, Lalitpur going to one grandson, Siddhi Narasiṃha, and Kathmandu to another, Lakṣmī Narasiṃha, father of the famous Pratāp Malla.

Lalitpur, as it is today, is essentially a creation of three kings, Siddhi Narasiṃha (reigned 1619 to 1660), his son Śrī Nivās (reigned 1660 to 1684), and his son, Yog Narendra (reigned 1684 to 1705). By 1641 Śrī Nivās was already sharing administrative responsibilities with his father, and he became joint king from 1649. Yog Narendra took a leaf from his father's book, and pushed him into religious retirement in 1684 or 1685, two years before his death.¹⁴ Yog Narendra himself was poisoned at the age of 39; contemporary sources ascribe this to an agent of the people of Bhaktapur, whose city he was besieging. From 1705 to 1768, when the city was taken by the Gorkhalis under Prithvi Nārāyaṇ Shah, the founder of modern Nepal and ancestor of the present king, Lalitpur was ruled by a succession of weak and short-lived monarchs. Real power reverted to the descendants of the noblemen who had dominated the city in the sixteenth century.

It will evident how much the city owes to the rulers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries if we examine the collection of monuments which make up Lalitpur's superb palace square. Two temples in the palace square date from the sixteenth century, both built by Purandara Siṃha: the Cār Nārāyaṇ temple [19] in 1566 in memory of his father, and the small Narasiṃha temple [20] in memory of a dead brother, in 1589. The palace in the centre of the city was built as it is today by Siddhi Narasiṃha and Śrī Nivās. Siddhi Narasiṃha built the Viśveśvara [21] temple in 1627 and the famous Kṛṣṇa temple [22] in 1637. Śrī Nivās built the small Nārāyaṇ temple [23] in 1652, and the Bhīmsen temple [24], which is so important for shopkeepers, artisans, and farmers of the city, in 1681. Śrī Nivās's minister, Bhagirath Bhaiyā built the Bhai Deval [25] in 1678 as a replica of the Viśvanāth temple of Benares, destroyed by the iconoclastic Moghul emperor, Aurangzeb, in 1669. Of the two other main temples in the square, the Śaṅkara-Nārāyaṇ temple [26] was built in 1706 by Yog Narendra's

sister, Rudramatī, and the Cyāsī ('eight-sided') Deval [27] in 1723 by his daughter Yogamatī, in memory of her son, Lok Prakāś, who was king for less than a year and died of smallpox at the age of 8.

The rulers of Lalitpur in this period defined their position in predominantly Hindu terms, which can be seen by the fact they filled their palace and its square entirely with Hindu gods. They themselves traced their descent from Rāma, an incarnation of Visnu, and claimed to be partial incarnations of Visnu. They were usually very pious, performing numerous Hindu devotions and taking initiations from Hindu priests. Yet they found themselves ruling a predominantly Buddhist population.

While we do not know if this was so in the Licchavi period, it can be said with considerable certainty that the vast majority of the ordinary people of Lalitpur in the Malla period were more Buddhist than Hindu in orientation. As today, they mostly had Buddhist Vajrācārya priests, and their most important god, Karuṇāmaya (Būgadyaḥ, later to be called Matsyendranāth), was Buddhist. The strength of Buddhism in the city can be measured by the number of Vajrācāryas and Śākyas, who together form the Buddhist clergy. Of the entire number in the Valley as a whole today, 46.5% live within Lalitpur, 32.3% in Kathmandu, and only 11.7% in Bhaktapur and surrounding villages. (The remainder live in villages in what used to be Lalitpur's kingdom, such as Būga, Baregā, Wāy [Chapagaon], and Durukhyaḥ.) These present-day proportions surely reflect the distribution of Buddhist clergy in the late Malla period also. Similarly, John Locke's survey of all the monasteries of the Valley found 166 monasteries of different sorts in Lalitpur, 113 in Kathmandu (including Cā Bahīl and Svayambhū), and 23 in Bhaktapur. The vast majority of these date back to the Malla period.

How did the Hindu Malla kings deal with this situation of a largely Buddhist populace? Essentially by two complementary strategies. In the first place they accepted the principal cult of the city, that of Karuṇāmaya or Būgadyaḥ; in this and other contexts they occasionally made use of the services of Vajrācārya priests. But secondly, they propagated a Hindu interpretation of it and at the same time tried to mould their subjects' rituals and practices so that they would be in line with Hindu norms. In other words, Buddhism, with its priests, gods, and rituals, was given a valid place, but encapsulated within a broader Hindu framework. In this Hindu framework, Brahmans had ultimate spiritual authority, and Buddhist priests were considered lower, more specialized ritual technicians. There is some evidence that Buddhism was considered a suitable religion for people of low status, though Buddhists themselves usually reject such an association.

High-born kings and their courtiers were the only ones who could have Brahmans as their family priests and the only ones entitled to receive Hindu Tantric initiations (Regmi 1965 1:644).

Before considering the steps the Hindu kings took to Hinduize the practices of their Buddhist subjects, a brief sketch of Newar Buddhism must be provided. The most important point to note is that the Buddhist clergy in the Malla period, as today, did not consist of an order of celibate monks drawn from the lay population. Rather it consisted of a hereditary caste, like Brahmans in the Hindu caste system. This caste was and is formed from two intermarrying sections, called Vajrācārya (meaning 'Masters of the Diamond' i.e. of the Diamond Way, Vajrayāna) and Śākya (short for Śākyabhikṣu, 'Buddhist monk', or for Śākyavaṃśa, of the Buddha's lineage'). The short form was adopted only in this century, as its bearers became more ambivalent about the monastic claim being made by it. Until then 'Śākyabhikṣu' was always the most common form of the name in Kathmandu, whereas from about 1615 'Śākyavaṃśa' was most popular in Lalitpur.¹⁵

Vajrācārya and Śākya men are, so to speak, married, householder monks. They become members of a monastery by going through a four-day Monastic Initiation in that monastery. Thereafter they have certain rights and duties there. They are responsible for the daily worship in the monastery according to a roster. With time and seniority they may become one of the elders of the monastery. Their sons may be initiated into the monastery only if they marry a Vajrācārya or a Śākya girl. Vajrācārya men, in addition, have a further right, to be priests for lay people as Brahmans are for lay Hindus. In the past those Vajrācāryas with a large number of parishioners (*jajmān*) could live from the priesthood alone, something not considered possible today. Other Newars, including the kings, treated the Vajrācāryas and Śākyas as Buddhist monks, giving them alms on various occasions, visiting their Buddhist monasteries, and showing by their use of respectful language that they considered them superior to all lay people. Though married, they maintained a religious style of life, keeping their heads shaved and spending much time on religious ritual and devotions.

By contrast, Buddhism in the Licchavi period was certainly of what is conventionally regarded as the more orthodox sort. There were monasteries inhabited by permanently celibate monks, who might be drawn from the local population or have come from India. It seems likely that married Vajrācārya priests first appeared in the Valley by the tenth or eleventh century, since parallel developments are documented for India as early as the fifth or sixth century. The present system was certainly in place by 1440,

when a document from Om Bāhāḥ specifies rules of the type in place today (Sakya and Vaidya 1970:29-31; Locke 1980:42 fn. 44). Between the tenth and the fifteenth centuries celibate monks and married practitioners probably coexisted, with celibates gradually dying out. The last recorded celibate monk resident in Lalitpur before the modern period was one Vanaratna, born in Bengal in 1384, who had studied in Tibet. He spent the last years of his life living in Pintu Bahī [28] in the north of the city, where he was greatly respected and performed three large alms-giving ceremonies; he died there, a few months after the last one, in 1468 (Roerich 1976:797-804; G.V. Vajracharya 1987).

Even after that time, however, Newars maintained contact with Tibetan Buddhism, since many of them went to Tibet to trade or work as artisans (Macdonald and Vergati Stahl 1979; Lewis 1989). Tibetans continued to visit the holy sites of the Valley and beyond. Occasionally Newars even became monks in the Tibetan tradition.¹⁶

While the Vajrācāryas and Śākyaas of the Malla period were in fact householders, their social and religious status was that of monks. They kept up the traditions of monks, rather than those of householders. In particular this meant that, as noted above, they went entirely shaven headed, without even the top-knot which is the symbol of the householder in Hinduism. Furthermore, some of them did not perform rituals considered necessary in Hinduism to remove the impurity of a birth or a death, since as monks, they were not subject to such impurity. Even today, if a member of Kwā Bāhāḥ is acting as *bāhā* or priest to its main deity, thereby observing monastic discipline, and a death occurs in his family, he is not affected by the death impurity until his term of officer is over.

The Hinduizing Measures of Siddhi Narasimha and Śrī Nivās

(1) The Cult of Karuṇāmaya: The sponsoring role of the king in the festival of Karuṇāmaya survives to this day. Normally he is represented by a sword, but traditionally he is present in person at the end of the festival when there is the ceremony of 'showing the vest' in Jawalakhel. Until the mid-seventeenth century, Karuṇāmaya's temple was always in the village of Būga, part of Lalitpur's kingdom, and four miles to the south. The god was brought to Lalitpur once a year for the annual chariot festival. The cult was taken up with enthusiasm both by Siddhi Narasimha and by Śrī Nivās. Historical sources are silent on the matter, but historians have deduced that possibly as early as 1621, at any rate by 1652 when Kunu Sharma wrote his *Kīrtipatākā* eulogizing the city, one or other of the two kings had taken the decision to establish a second temple of Karuṇāmaya in Lalitpur itself.

Henceforth Karuṇāmaya was to spend six months in each temple, thus bringing him closer to the people of Lalitpur, who were his devotees, and no doubt increasing the popularity of the king. Ta Bāhāḥ was chosen as the site for his new temple. It seems that the membership of this ancient monastery had died out and some Vajrācāryas from a small monastery in Dau Bāhāḥ *twāḥ* called Bhelakhu Bāhāḥ [29] were assigned to it (Locke 1980:334; 1985:137). However, they have no connection with the cult of Karuṇāmaya, which is entirely in the hands of the *pānjus*, Vajrācāryas and Śākya from Būga.

(A) Identification of Karuṇāmaya with Kṛṣṇa or Viṣṇu:

According to local chronicles and myths (Locke 1980:303; Hasrat 1970:69; Owens 1989:171), King Siddhi Narasiṃha introduced the custom of having two Brahmans ride on the chariot of Karuṇāmaya. Although the rest of the cult is the responsibility of Buddhist priests, this provides a Hindu veneer, making Hindu participation in the festival acceptable. And indeed, the annual festival is to this today as important for the Hindu inhabitants of Lalitpur, including Brahmans, as it is for the Buddhists.

Furthermore, Siddhi Narasiṃha seems to have encouraged the identification of Karuṇāmaya with Kṛṣṇa, whose famous temple he had just built in front of his palace. According to Padmagiri's chronicle (Hasrat 1970:67), Siddhi Narasiṃha divided the garden of the palace into three parts, dedicating them to Degutale, Taleju, and "Matsyendranāth." Degutale and Taleju are two forms of the Malla kings' own tutelary deity; if we accept the chronicle's assertion that Karuṇāmaya was given an equivalent position, this suggests that he was the "national deity" of Lalitpur even in Siddhi Narasiṃha's time, and not only from the time of his son Śrī Nivās, as suggested by Locke (1980:341).¹⁷

At the same time the Buddha was recognized as an avatar of Viṣṇu, a classical Hindu doctrine evolved precisely for this purpose, to absorb Buddhist devotions into a Hindu framework; and the Buddha is depicted among the ten avatars placed around the verandah of the Kṛṣṇa temple. This policy of identification continued with the famous golden window of the palace, dating from the reign of Śrī Nivās. Here the Buddhist *bodhisattva*, Sṛṣṭikarṭṭṛ-lokeśvara, 'Lokeśvara emitting all the gods', a form of Karuṇāmaya, is depicted emitting the Hindu gods.¹⁸ In a Buddhist context this demonstrates the superiority of Buddhism to Hinduism. But in this window the whole icon is framed by forms of Viṣṇu above, and by Viṣṇu's mount, Garuḍa, below, again indicating that the principal Buddhist *bodhisattva* is a form of Viṣṇu. When the king appeared at the window he

would, of course, be framed as Viṣṇu also. Thus the most popular divinity of the city (Karuṇāmaya, Būgadyaḥ) and the king himself are both forms of the same high Hindu god, Viṣṇu.

Apparently the unpublished inscription on the window shows that it was given by a Śākya or Vajrācārya goldsmith to the king.¹⁹ Thus the correspondence which the window postulates between king, *bodhisattva*, and Hindu god, could be encouraged by loyal Buddhist subjects. In a similar way, in 1667, a Śākya from Mahābaudha, Uku Bāhāḥ, called Jodhaju, presented King Śrī Nivās with a golden throne that is displayed every year in front of the Kṛṣṇa temple on the full moon of the month of Jyeṣṭh.²⁰

(B) Identification with Matsyendranāth, a Form of Śiva: For most Nepalese, the identification of Karuṇāmaya as Matsyendranāth is better known than the stories about Kṛṣṇa. Indeed it is as Matsyendra or Macchindranāth that the god is known in the outside world, which for a long time remained ignorant of the essentially Buddhist nature of his cult.

Matsyendranāth was in origin probably a historical personage, a Tantric *yogin* who lived in the tenth or eleventh century (Ghurye 1953:146). He is claimed by both the Śaivite and the Buddhist Tantric tradition. Gorakhnāth, the spiritual forebear of the Śaivite Nāth or Kānpaṭā yogins, who became the patron saint of Gorkhā, and therefore of the Shah dynasty, was Matsyendranāth's disciple. From the fourteenth century at least, Nāth *yogins* were present in the Kathmandu Valley (Unbescheid 1980). They made Maru Sattaḥ, the famous Kāṣṭha Maṇḍap that gave Kathmandu its name, into a Gorkhanāth temple and stayed there until its 1966 renovation. It was probably they who first decided to identify Karuṇāmaya/Būgadyaḥ as Matsyendranāth (Locke 1980:431-42). It is likely that it was also they who first designated Cākwādyah, the Lokeśvara of Tanga Bāhāḥ, as 'Mīnnāth', an alternative epithet of Matsyendranāth.

Śrī Nivās encouraged the identification with Matsyendranāth. Kunu Sharma's *Kīrtipatākā* describes the temples of Karuṇāmaya and Cākwādyah at length, using only the names Matsyendranāth and Mīnnāth. In 1673 Śrī Nivās instituted an annual feast in Būga for Nāth *yogins*, the principal worshippers of Matsyendranāth, as part of the god's annual festival (Locke 1980:311). Toffin (1993:154-6) has interpreted aspects of Karuṇāmaya's cult and myth as reflecting Siddhi Narasiṃha's and Śrī Nivās's attempts to have Lalitpur recognised as the foremost city of the Valley.

Another reason Śrī Nivās may have had for encouraging the identification of Karuṇāmaya with Matsyendranāth may have been precisely the link

between Matsyendranāth and Gorakhnāth. It was at this time that the kingdom of Gorkha began to be involved in the affairs of the Valley, and Śrī Nivās may have wished to express a paternalistic attitude to Gorkha through the guru-disciple relationship of the kingdoms' respective patron saints. He was not to know that it was to be the disciple who became all-powerful, and the myths would be turned around so that the guru legitimated the disciple's supremacy. It was in fact only after 1769 that the identification of Karuṇāmaya as Matsyendranāth became significant even for the people of Lalitpur, being then integrated into the mythological accounts of the god's origin in Assam.²¹

(2) Regulation of Buddhist monasteries

(A) **The Main Monasteries:** Newars today recognize three types of monastery: main monasteries (*mū bāhāḥ*), *bahī*, and branch monasteries (*kacā bāhāḥ*). There are in Lalitpur 18 main monasteries, 25 *bahī*, and 123 branch monasteries of various sorts. Main monasteries, though the least numerous, are the largest monuments and have the largest membership; in every way they are the dominant Buddhist force in Lalitpur, as indeed in Kathmandu. The *bahī*, though there are more of them, are smaller, poorer institutions with many fewer members. The *bahī* attempt, or used to attempt, to stand for a more meditative and monastic form of Buddhism in opposition to the dominant *bāhāḥ* (Gellner 1987). The differences between them are discussed below. What is important, for the moment, is the difference between the main monasteries and the *bahī* taken together, on the one hand, and branch monasteries, on the other.

The principal distinction is that in main monasteries and in *bahī*, Monastic Initiation (*cūḍākarma*, *bare chuyegu*) may be performed, and when a boy passes through the initiation in that monastery he is *ipso facto* a member of that monastery. In branch monasteries, by contrast, such initiations are not normally performed. Most branch monasteries were founded by Śākyas or Vajrācāryas who were already members of a main monastery or, more rarely, a *bahī* during the Malla period. Many were founded since then, but it would be too expensive to found a new monastery of this sort today. Sometimes such branch monasteries were also founded by lay castes, such as Śreṣṭhas or Śilpakārs, and the regular ritual was entrusted to the Śākyas and/or Vajrācāryas of a given monastery.

These branch monasteries can be called, for convenience, lineage monasteries, though it should be remembered that this is not a translation of a local term. Such monasteries *belong to* a lineage or group of related households descended from the founder. They share the duties of performing

rituals there, and they share the income which the founder or subsequent donors have given to the monastery. It does not really make sense to say that these monasteries have a Monastic Community (*samgha*, *sā*) as main monasteries and *bahī* do. Whereas with main monasteries and *bahī*, individual Śākyas and Vajrācāryas *are members of them*, but do not own them, lineage monasteries are treated as the collective property of a family or lineage, as the case may be. Thus, they are run like a *guthi*, the widespread Newar socio-religious institution for religious purposes. The land they previously held to fund their rituals, and which in some cases they still do hold, is held under *guthi* land tenure, that is to say, as tax-free religious land. As with *guthis*, members may drop out if they wish without stigma, and nowadays many people do so. What Śākyas and Vajrācāryas cannot do is drop out of their main monastery or *bahī*, without losing their caste status altogether.

In short, the vast majority of branch monasteries are private institutions, built on the model of main monasteries, but without an initiated Monastic Community. They are not a focus of devotion from other Newars. None the less, the existence of these lineage monasteries in large numbers is a highly significant fact. They express the Buddhist allegiance of the majority of Lalitpur's inhabitants and are an essential part of its townscape, creating a warren of connected courtyards in which everyday life is placed in a pervasive Buddhist sacred framework.

There is one further type of monastery, usually called 'branch monastery'. These are monasteries which fit into none of the above categories. They do in fact have a Monastic Community of initiated members, but fall outside the recognized lists of main monasteries and *bahī*. Here the term 'branch monastery' is being used as a catch-all, residual category to refer to any monastery that falls outside the recognized system. There are just three of these in Lalitpur (Nah Bāhāḥ [41], Hyan Bāhāḥ [42], and Yoku Bāhāḥ [43], and a further six that are semi-independent branches of Kwā Bāhāḥ: see below). Such monasteries we can call independent monasteries. They are not very significant in Lalitpur; in Kathmandu, by contrast, there are more of them, of undoubted antiquity, with more members and an important role in Buddhist ritual in the city (e.g., in Samyak). One further category needs to be mentioned: monasteries-by-extension. These are residential courtyards (*nani*) with large numbers of Śākyas and Vajrācāryas, and numerous *caityas* that have come to be given monastery names, even though they were never established as monasteries and do not function as monasteries in any of the above senses. The two main examples here are the courtyards of Nyākhācuk [40] and Nāg Bāhāḥ [45] (old name: Ilanhe).

Where does the dominant system of main monasteries and *bahī* come from? Wright's chronicle, which was written in Lalitpur, gives a detailed account of Siddhi Narasiṃha's regulations, which we are now in a position to understand.²² He evidently attempted to systematize a previously existing situation. He probably wished to have a few specified leaders of his Buddhist subjects, whom he could deal with efficiently. Perhaps also he wished to make sure that the Śākya and Vajrācāryas did indeed constitute a caste, like the rest of his subjects, and did not recruit or initiate members from other castes. An officially sanctioned list of monasteries entitled to perform Monastic Initiation would help to enforce such a rule.

At the time of Siddhi Narasiṃha there was already a recognized list of twelve main monasteries to which three newly founded monasteries were added, making fifteen, to these fifteen three further were then added, making a final list of eighteen. Though there have been eighteen since that time, they, are still known colloquially as 'the fifteen monasteries' (*jhīnyāgu bihār*). The original twelve were:

<u>Usual name</u>	<u>Sanskritic title</u>
Tangah Bāhāḥ [12]	Bālārcana-saṃskārita-Jyeṣṭhavarṇa-mahāvihāra
Ta Bāhāḥ [17]	Bhuvanākaravarṇa-s°-Dharmakīrti-m°
Bhīcchē Bāhāḥ [30]	Śaṅkaradeva-s°-Mayurvarṇa-m°
Guji Bāhāḥ [31]	Vaiśya-Śrī-Divākaravarṇa-s°-mahāvihāra
Uku Bāhāḥ [14]	Śivadeva-s°-Śrī-Rudradevavarṇa-m°
Ha Bāhāḥ [15]	Śrī-Lakṣmīkalyāṇavarṇa-s°-Ratnākara-m°
Kwā Bāhāḥ [16]	Bhāskaradeva-s°-Hiranyavarṇa-m°
Bu Bāhāḥ [32]	Vidyādharaśarma-s°-Yaśodhara-m°
Cuka Bāhāḥ [13]	Mānadeva-s°-Cakravārṇa-m°
Su Bāhāḥ [33]	Indradeva-s°-Jayamanoharavarṇa-m°
Dau Bāhāḥ [34]	Rudradevagargagotravarṇa-s°-Śrī-Dattanāma-m°
Yachu Bāhāḥ [35]	Balādhara-gupta-s°-Balādhara-m°

The three new monasteries were supposedly:

Om Bāhāḥ [36]	Sūryavarṇa-s°-Vajrakīrti-m°
Jyo Bāhāḥ [37]	Rudradeva-Naṅgapāla-s°-Jyoti-m°
Dhum Bāhāḥ [38]	Guṇalakṣmī-s°-Guṇalakṣmī-m°

To these were added the monasteries of Cobhar and Kirtipur, other settlements within the kingdom of Lalitpur, and another new monastery, built after the king made the rules, namely, Si Bāhāḥ in the west of Lalitpur:

Co Bāhāḥ
Cilāco Bāhāḥ
Si Bāhāḥ [39]

Indradeva-s°-Śrī-Asanalokeśvara-m°
Jagatapālavarma-s°-Padmakāṣṭhagiri-m°
Śrī-Vatsa-m°

There is a problem with this account, in that we know that three of the four supposedly new monasteries—Dhum Bāhāḥ, Om Bāhāḥ, and Si Bāhāḥ—existed before the time of Siddhi Narasiṃha (Locke 1985:30, 68, 70, 174). However it may well be that their membership had died out and they were given to Śākya and Vajrācāryas from elsewhere as part of the reorganization (in the case of Si Bāhāḥ it is possible that it was moved to its present site at this time, as happened to Ha Bāhāḥ). The chronicle does indeed record a reallocation because of defunct membership in the case of Cuka Bāhāḥ, which was given to a Vajrācārya Tantrik from Nyākhācuk [40], a member of Kwā Bāhāḥ; and indeed, still today, Cuka Bāhāḥ, though treated as a main monastery for ritual purposes, is owned and run by Vajrācārya members of Kwā Bāhāḥ. It has therefore become, in effect, a lineage monastery.

King Siddhi Narasiṃha created a new order of precedence among these monasteries and did away with the old one. Tanga Bāhāḥ and Ta Bāhāḥ remained first and second, in recognition of their antiquity. Thereafter the new list simply reflected the order in which they appeared at the meeting he had summoned them to. It is probably this order that is now used in the festival of Samyak, that is to say, this is the order in which the divinities representing the monasteries are set up when they come to Nāg Bāhāḥ. This runs as follows:

Tanga Bāhāḥ, Ta Bāhāḥ, Dhum Bāhāḥ, Cuka Bāhāḥ, Kwā Bāhāḥ, Om Bāhāḥ, Dau Bāhāḥ, Bu Bāhāḥ, Ha Bāhāḥ, Jyo Bāhāḥ, Guji Bāhāḥ, Bhīchē Bāhāḥ, Uku Bāhāḥ, Su Bāhāḥ, Yachu Bāhāḥ, Cilāco Bāhāḥ, Co Bāhāḥ, Si Bāhāḥ.

Siddhi Narasiṃha confirmed the tradition whereby five of the monasteries—Bhīchē Bāhāḥ, Uku Bāhāḥ, Guji Bāhāḥ, Su Bāhāḥ, and Yachu Bāhāḥ—shared a single elder. (This is no longer so today.) Each of the other of the original twelve, with the exception of Cuka Bāhāḥ (which had no members as noted above), had an elder each. Thus there were seven elders in all. This group of seven elders, so the chronicle tells us, was known as the Seven Tathāgatas (i.e., Buddhas), and they were respected as such by the people. Siddhi Narasiṃha required each elder to be initiated in the *thapā twaye* ritual and for them all to belong to a *guthi*. Five of them, the elders of Ta Bāhāḥ, Ha Bāhāḥ, Bu Bāhāḥ, Kwā Bāhāḥ, and Bhīchē Bāhāḥ, were made responsible for overseeing the purifications of Lalitpur merchants who had been in Tibet, and for passing on the fees to the king.

The three independent monasteries mentioned above are all small institutions which slipped through the net of Siddhi Narasimha's reforms. Some say that the Vajrācāryas of Hyan Bāhāḥ were invited to Lalitpur from Kathmandu because they were experts in performing the ritual of *nāg sādhan*, or summoning holy serpents, in order to bring rain. This might account for their position outside the main monasteries. It seems plausible to assume that the monasteries with an initiated Monastic Community which are semi-independent branches of Kwā Bāhāḥ were amalgamated to Kwā Bāhāḥ at the time of Siddhi Narasimha's regulations: these monasteries are Aṭha Bāhāḥ [45], Mu Bāhāḥ [46], Yetā Bāhāḥ [47], Ikhāchē Bāhāḥ [48], Vaidya Bāhāḥ [49], and Michu Bāhāḥ [50]. Members of these monasteries perform part of their Monastic Initiation ritual in Kwā Bāhāḥ, but separately from Kwā Bāhāḥ members. On this occasion they may enter the shrine of Kwā Bāhāḥ's principal deity. But this gives them no rights in Kwā Bāhāḥ: they may not be the god-guardian in Kwā Bāhāḥ or become elders, nor may they participate in the annual feast. For outsiders, and thus for the Malla kings, they could claim to be members of Kwā Bāhāḥ, but at the same time they maintained their independence and were denied the once-lucrative right to be god-guardian in Kwā Bāhāḥ (Gellner 1987:400-1).

The chronicle does not say when Siddhi Narasimha undertook these reforms, but it is possible that it was early in his reign. Around 1615, before he was in fact crowned, Śākyas in Lalitpur stopped calling themselves Śākyabhikṣu or 'Bhikṣu', i.e. 'Buddhist monk', and started calling themselves 'Śākyabhikṣu', i.e. 'of the Buddha's lineage'. Śākyas in Kathmandu did not do this. Perhaps the Lalitpur Śākyas felt that, in view of Siddhi Narasimha's Hinduizing tendencies, it was better to base their claim to monastic status on shared descent from the Buddha rather than on disparate caste origins and shared religious identity. Furthermore, there is evidence from the sixteenth century that becoming a Vajrācārya was to a degree optional: some men in the family would do so, others would remain Śākyas. This is certainly not so today: only the sons of Vajrācāryas may become Vajrācāryas, and all are considered so, although the theoretical possibility is admitted that a Vajrācārya young man who omits to take the required initiation will fall to the status of a Śākya. It may well be that this greater emphasis on descent was part of the same approximation to Hindu norms and occurred simultaneously with the Śākyas' adoption of the surname 'Śākyavaṃśa'.

(B) Regulation of the *bahī*: At the time of Siddhi Narasimha, the members of the *bāhāḥ* did not deny that they were householders. They were

householder monks, that is to say, they maintained the religious role of monk, while in fact being married and having a household. They did this by following monastic rules while carrying out their duties and devotions inside the monastery, but laying them aside at home. Ideologically, they expressed this by following the path of Vajrayāna or Tantric Buddhism, which involved the use of fire sacrifices (*homa*) as in Hinduism.

The members of the *bahī*, by contrast, though also in fact householders, and thus hereditary monks, did not, it seems, accept the ideology of Tantric Buddhism. They claimed, according to Wright's chronicle, to be the representatives of a purer, older Buddhism, one based on celibacy. They represented the meditational, forest-dwelling wing of the Buddhist clergy, disdaining ritual for the practice of celibacy and restraint. They expressed this claim in the names they adopted, continuing to call themselves 'Bhikṣu', or even 'Brahmacarya Bhikṣu' ('celibate monk'), in order to oppose themselves to the Śākyas of the *bāhāḥ*. Furthermore, the architecture of the *bahī* was deliberately plain and archaic.

It was the members of the *bahī*, who did not perform purifications after a death on the grounds that they were monks, who particularly troubled Siddhi Narasiṃha.²³ To one of the *bahī* monasteries, Ī Bahī[51], he assigned a Vajrācārya priest from Dhum Bāhāḥ. He may have done this because of the strong tradition that this monastery was founded by a Brahman, Sunaya Śrī Miśra, who was supposedly converted to Buddhism in Tibet and had returned to Nepal. This is undoubtedly an ancient site, and it is likely that the monastery goes back to the twelfth century at least (Locke 1985:204).

Then Siddhi Narasiṃha grouped the *bahī* monasteries into two, the Fifteen Bahī and the Ten Bahī, the former being those who were located in the northern half of Lalitpur, the latter in the southern half. (Subsequently Ī Bahī was absorbed into the group of fifteen.) Each group was to have a single set of five elders between them, no doubt because there were so few members in these monasteries. The group of Ten split up about 70 years ago; the group of Fifteen split into two groups in the 1950s, and further splits have followed.

Siddhi Narasiṃha evidently wanted to assign to all the *bahī*, as he had done for Ī Bahī, a Vajrācārya priest to carry out the purifying fire sacrifice after death. This the members of the *bahī* said was impossible for them. So a man was appointed in each group who became the single hereditary priest responsible for performing all initiations and other life-cycle rituals for the members of the group. He was to be known as a *bhikṣu ācārya*, or 'monk master', thus differentiating him from the Vajrācārya priests of the *bāhāḥ* monasteries. In the group of Fifteen the priest comes from Naka Bahī [52], and the group of Ten from Jyābā Bahī [53].

These arrangements of Siddhi Narasiṃha have lasted in many cases down to the present, or at least until within the memory of those alive today.²⁴

The Early Shah (1769-1846) and Rana (1846-1951) Periods

The arrival of the new Shah dynasty, and the creation of the modern state of Nepal, led to a new situation for the Buddhists of Lalitpur. They were no longer the members of a small kingdom in which they were in the majority. Whereas the Malla kings had wanted to Hinduize their subjects, but at the same time were keen devotees of the principal Buddhist rituals, the new dynasty recognized only Karuṇāmaya, now ever more strongly identified as Matsyendranāth. Lalitpur as a whole lost much land, so that Wright could record in 1877 that "its general aspect is much the same as that of the capital. The streets are as narrow and dirty, the gutters as offensive, and the temples even more numerous; but it appears much more dilapidated than Kāthmāndū, many of the houses and temples being in ruins" (1972:16).

The pressures of Hinduization became even stronger under the Rana hereditary prime ministers. At this time Śākya and Vajrācāryas regularly performed elaborate *śrāddha*, or Ancestor Worship, rituals that have been considerably pared down since 1951. In Kathmandu many *caityas* were constructed with a north-facing *jaldroni*, so that they could be taken as being in accordance with Hindu norms. It is interesting, however, that this syncretic Hindu-Buddhist form, so common in Kathmandu, was set up only once in Lalitpur, in Bhelāchē *twāh* [54].

At the same time, great respect was given to tradition, and the practices of tradition were supported by law and backed by the force of the state. Thus the Buddhist identity of the Śākya and Vajrācāryas was perpetuated, albeit presented in increasingly Hindu terms. Many of the high-status lay castes, especially those classified as Śreṣṭha, were influenced more strongly by Hinduism. In Lalitpur, many Śreṣṭhas were traditionally Buddhist, either having Vajrācāryas as priests or, even if with Brahman family priests, traditionally taking Buddhist Tantric Initiation. These families began to move away from Buddhism, and consciously adopt Hindu practices. This meant that they did not sponsor Buddhist rituals, and they were less concerned to keep up and renovate the Buddhist temples and other endowments of their forebears.

As elsewhere in the Valley, the earthquake of 1934 caused great destruction. Many of Lalitpur's Buddhists were trading, or practising as gold and silversmiths, in Tibet. Some families made considerable amounts of money, and much of this went into religious activities. A rich Śākya trader called Lakṣmī Narasiṃha from Nyākācuk, a member of Kwā Bāhāh,

renovated Naka Bahī [52], simply because he lived nearby. He also had the northern 'Aśokan' *stūpa* [55] covered with cement, endowing land for the annual whitewashing, and rebuilt the shelter (*sattah*) on the north side, replacing the broken gods inside. Other trading families, also members of Kwā Bāhāh, contributed repeated donations which have made it famous as 'The Golden Temple'.

In the Rana period, then, the traditional fabric of the town was maintained. Although the protective walls which encircled the city in the Malla period were allowed to decay, their position was remembered and retained ritual significance. No one attempted to build outside them. However, in the areas to the west and south-west of the city, the Ranas built palaces. Many wealthier Lalitpur residents imitated the styles imported by the Ranas, by plastering the fronts of their houses with imitation stucco Corinthian pillars, many of which can still be seen.

In 1860 Jagat Shamsheer Rana, one of Jang Bahadur Rana's younger brothers, built the Hindu temple complex at Śaṅkhamūl [56], Lalitpur's holy riverside bathing place and burning *ghāt*. There are two main temples, one each to Śiva and Viṣṇu, and one to Hanumān. Here, as at other riverside bathing places, such as at Paśupati and Gyaneshwar, the Ranas were setting out to emulate the most holy Hindu city of Kāśī (Benares) and to establish their own position as preeminent Hindu patrons.

Recent Trends

The period since 1951, the coming of 'democracy', as it is called, has ushered in many changes. There has been a considerable loosening of the caste structure and a decline of deference. This, while no doubt beneficial in many other ways, has had several deleterious effects on traditional Newar Buddhism. It has become less and less desirable to pursue a career as a Buddhist priest, both financially and in terms of status. Consequently a vicious circle has become entrenched whereby only those who are obliged by financial necessity and lack of aptitude for anything else take up the priesthood after their father dies. Lay people respect the priesthood even less, and so on.²⁵

Another, even more tangible consequence of recent social change is that most of the land which provided income for the upkeep of Buddhist monuments has been lost, stolen, or sold. In the past the prestige of Śākyas and Vajrācāryas, as Buddhist monks and priests, was such that tenant farmers rarely failed to bring the crop that was due on land belonging to a monastery. Furthermore, since it was land owned collectively, no individual had the incentive to ensure it was properly registered, as was the case with individually owned land. In this way, much land has been registered in the

name of the tenant, or even in the name of an unscrupulous member of the monastery. Even where a monastery or other endowed temple still owns agricultural land, the yield is much less, because the law now stipulates that the tenant only owes 23 *pāthīs* of paddy per year to the landowner. In the same way many of the other holdings of monasteries, especially images of the gods, have been lost, either stolen away at night when there was no one there to guard them, or embezzled by members themselves.

Not all monasteries have managed their inheritance so badly. He Bāhāh [15] has, by all accounts, invested its assets well in shops and bank accounts, so that it has a regular income to finance rituals and renovations. Kwā Bāhāh, which contains many historic icons of great value, has so far managed to guard them against most attempts at theft, thanks to the watchfulness of its members and its fortress-like construction.

In the last twenty-five years tourism has become a major economic factor in the life of the city. Many Śākyas and Vajrācāryas earn their living as artisans making statues, jewellery, and curios for sale to tourists, and many others have shops selling them. But for this demand from the tourist trade it is likely that the traditional arts of god-making and silverwork would have all but died out.

An important new development since the 1930s is the appearance of Theravāda Buddhism in the Kathmandu Valley.²⁶ The first Newars to become Theravāda monks were persecuted by the Rana authorities. Subsequently, Bhikshu Amritananda, originally from Tansen, established good relations with King Tribhuvan, and after 1951 the movement flourished. In Lalitpur there are two Theravāda monasteries, Śākyasiṃha Vihāra, recently extensively rebuilt in Thaina, and Maṇimaṇḍapa Vihāra inside Dhapagā Bahī (which has taken the latter's Sanskrit title), as well as a nunnery near Śākyasiṃha Vihāra. For many Buddhist Newars, dissatisfied with traditional Newar Buddhism, Theravāda Buddhism provides an alternative that seems more approachable, more modern, and more egalitarian. Its far simpler rituals, the greater role it gives to preaching, its stress on education, and its use of modern methods of communication, such as magazines, give it an increasing appeal. Even the majority who are not exclusive supporters of the Theravāda, respect and make use of it, for instance, by sending their daughters to the nunnery for twelve days, instead of performing the traditional girls puberty ritual of *bārā tayegu* (Kunreuther 1995). The Theravāda Buddhists' wide use of Nepali (the national language and the language of education), rather than Newari, may also make it seem more modern; the use of Nepali is certainly intended to spread their message beyond the Kathmandu Valley and the Newar community. Consequently, for

a considerable minority of upwardly mobile Newars Theravāda Buddhism represents a preferable form of Buddhism.²⁷

Conclusion

Lalitpur today is effectively part of the greater Kathmandu conurbation. There have been massive changes since it was the sacred centre of its own kingdom. None the less, its ancient core retains a considerable vitality and definite, though changing, Buddhist and Hindu identity.

This account has emphasized the Buddhist parts of Lalitpur's history; these, it has been shown, existed in a broadly Hindu context.²⁸ Even Śākyasiṃha Vihār, one of the centres of Theravāda activity in Lalitpur, was built on a site with a pre-existing *śivaliṅga* which has not been disturbed, even if it is generally ignored. The famous 'religious tolerance' or 'harmony' of Nepal – which Dhanavajra Vajracharya certainly approved of and exemplified – may perhaps have been overdrawn in many accounts. It would perhaps be better to refer instead to religious pluralism, mutual recognition, and contextual syncretism.

Thus it is surely right to draw attention to the underlying competition of interpretations between Buddhist and Hindu clergy (Brinkhaus 1980; Gellner 1992: ch. 3), a competition in which kings, Hindu ascetics, and ordinary peasants and artisans were all in their way active participants. This competition exists at all levels. The origin of Lalitpur is explained in Hindu and monarchical terms by the Bir Deva myth. But for most of the populace the city's identity is more closely linked to the coming of Karuṇāmaya, who brings the yearly rains on which their crops depend. But Karuṇāmaya himself is subject to competing interpretations. As one would expect in a complex, stratified society, there are numerous strategies available, stressing inclusion or exclusion according to context. It ought not therefore to be considered especially surprising if Buddhists are found at one period actively cooperating in cultural practices as a strategy of inclusion which at a different period they begin to abandon as unnecessary Hindu accretions.

The religious competition I have drawn attention to has played itself out in a context of generally shared assumptions about religion, power, and social space. These assumptions, under the impact of pan-Nepalese, and indeed global, change, no longer go without saying.

Notes

1. An earlier version of this article appeared initially as part of a longer report on Buddhist monuments in Lalitpur for the Patan Conservation and Development Programme (1993). It is published here, by kind permission, in a more academic form, with a fuller discussion of some points. I am

grateful to Niels Gutschow and William Douglas for comments on previous drafts. I alone am responsible for any errors of fact, interpretation, or omission.

2. According to Wright's chronicle (1972:139) Narendra Deva was Bir Deva's grandson.
3.*h āmrā 3 svayambhū śivaliṅga*....
4. In this version no year is given. In Hasrat (1970:43-4) Bir Dev is said to have ascended the throne in Kaligat 3500, i.e., 399 C.E., and to have ruled for 95 years.
5. These are the eight Mother Goddesses who surround the city, here as in the other cities of the Valley. It will be seen that the list is not systematic, some of the directions being repeated. See Gutschow (1982:163) for the positions of most of those mentioned here. Unlike Bhaktapur, in Lalitpur only five of the set have temples and are worshipped regularly outside of those rare occasions when a pilgrimage around the set of eight is organized.
6. The chronicles say that these chariot festivals were discontinued, with the exception of Minnāth's, when that of Karuṇ maya's was begun by Narendra Deva (Wright 1972:149-50; Lamshal 1966:17). The valī account continues with the story of a merchant called Ratn kara who became wealthy in Tibet, gave many gifts to Buddhist monks, and eventually become one himself at Naka Bahī [52] (Lamshal 1966:3).
7. Note that this is the spelling given in Wright (1972:136).
8. See Locke (1980:287) for details.
9. The Bhāṣā Vamśāvalī puts the creation of the palace 'Māṇigalbhātṭa' and the consecration of both Maṇi-Gaṇeśa and Maṇi-Kumāra some generations later in the time of Guṇakāma Deva (Lamshal 1966:21-2).
10. D. Vajracharya (1973:496-8, 505). D. R. Regmi (1983 3:213) places Gullamṭanga near Paśupati, but this surely takes a much too restricted interpretation of the phrase 'in the realm (*kṣetra*) of Paśupati'.
11. The popularity of the lexeme *-varṇa-* in the honorific monastery names of today can be explained by the influence of Kwā Bāhāḥ, which is known formally as Hiranyavarṇa Mahāvihāra. This is probably the only honorific monastery name that is widely known throughout the city.
12. Gutschow (1982:152), Locke (1985:151-2). A small Buddha is still displayed half-submerged in a square copper container outside the palace during the Buddhist holy month of Gūlā (roughly equivalent to August). This commemorates both the river which once passed the spot and the monastery moved from nearby (Sakya 1974:23-5).
13. The earliest and latest dates for the use of these terms are 1141 (Peteich 1984:59) and 1524 (Rajvamshi 1983:82).
14. This, at any rate, is Dhanavajra's interpretation of the historical record (D. Vajracharya 1989:93).
15. A possible reason for this is discussed below. For further details, see Gellner (1989, 1992:164-6).

16. Sakya and Vaidya (1970:130-4) give an inscription from Bhaktapur dated 778 N.S. (1558) recording the building of a monastery called Muni Bāhāḥ in memory of a deceased Newar by his wife, daughter, and son, who was a Tibetan monk in Tashilunpo, Tibet. (The inscription is unclear as to whether Padmadhvaj is the monk's brother or simply the monk's Newar name.) Cf. Locke (1985:439), whose interpretation, however, is that the monk was unrelated to the donors.
17. Against the chronicle, it has to be said that the inscriptions from the palace gardens do not support it. Śrī Nivās's inscription of 1676 records that his father had established the garden in order to provide flowers for "śrī tin iṣṭadevatā", i.e., Taleju/Degutale. It says nothing about "Matsyendra" (Tewari *et al.* 1962:13). I have not been able to check the original manuscript of Padmagiri's chronicle.
18. According to Hemraj Sakya (1974:22), the icon was made following the Guṇakāraṇḍavyūha. He also argues, less plausibly, that the element 'Maṇi' derives from Avalokiteśvara's mantra (*ibid.*: 24-5).
19. I owe this information to Nutan Sharma. Documentation on the window is hard to come by. A.K. Vajracharya (1986:67) ascribes it to Siddhi Narasiṃha.
20. See Tewari *et al.* (1962:12). I am indebted to Bronwen Bledsoe for drawing my attention both to the custom and to the inscription.
21. Compare the most popular mythological telling of Karuṇāmaya's coming to Nepal by Asha Kaji Vajracharya (1980) with Malla period representations (Vergati 1985).
22. For original Nepali text, see Cambridge University MS. 1952A (folios 129-34). For approximate translation, see Wright (1972:234-7). For a retranslation of the passage on the *bāhī*, see Locke (1985:30-1) and Gellner (1987:396-7).
23. Burleigh (1976:40) has interpreted the 1675 proclamation by the kings of the three cities—Śrī Nivās of Lalitpur, Nṛpendra of Kathmandu, and Jitāmitra of Bhaktapur—in a similar vein, as an attempt regulate the mourning of their subjects in line with Hindu norms. But in fact, as pointed out to me by Dhanavajra Vajracharya in conversation in 1992, this is a misinterpretation based on lack of understanding of the Newari of the inscription. The three kings were attempting to regulate the degrees of closeness of royal relatives, in order to keep at arm's length possible rivals from outside the palace. Dhanavajra compared it to the classification of Ranas in the Rana period into A, B, and C classes.
24. For further details of Siddhi Narasiṃha's regulation of the *bahī*, see Gellner (1987:395-7).
25. On kinship among the Śākya and Vajrācāryas, and for more on the sociological implications of their changing religious identity, see Gellner (1995).

26. A minority of other Newar Buddhists practise in the Tibetan tradition, as has long been the case. They do not proselytize in the same way as the Theravādins and have not established a specifically Newar form of Tibetan Buddhism.
27. On Theravāda Buddhism in Nepal, see Kloppenberg (1977), Bechert and Hartmann (1987), and Gellner (1992:321-8).
28. On the problems of defining Hinduism in general, see Sontheimer and Kulke (1991). On the problems of assuming Hinduism to be monolithic or unchanging, when interpreting Newar society, see Gellner (1991).

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THE OLD CITY OF LALITPUR

Key to map of Lalitpur

1. Lalita's nwaḥ, Jhyātāpwaḥ
2. Lalitāpur sattah
3. Alternative site of Lalita's nwaḥ
4. Kumbheśvar temple
5. Patuko dwā/Kirāti darbār
6. Kwā Bāhāḥ
7. Cyāsah twāḥ
8. Guita twāḥ
9. Mangah/Mangal Bazaar
10. Lūhiti/Sundharā
11. Su Bāhāḥ twāḥ
12. Tangah Bāhāḥ
13. Cuka Bāhāḥ
14. Uku Bāhāḥ
15. Ha Bāhāḥ
16. Sundari Cok
17. Ta Bāhāḥ
18. Nhū Bahah
19. Cār Nārāyaṇ temple (1566)
20. Narasimha temple (1589)
21. Viśveśvara temple (1627)
22. Kṛṣṇa temple (1637)
23. small Nārāyaṇ temple (1652)
24. Bhimsen temple (1681)
25. Bhai Deval (1678)
26. Saṅkara-Nārāyaṇ temple (1706)
27. Cyāsī Deval (1723)
28. Pintu Bahī
29. Bheḷākhu Bāhāḥ
30. Bhīnchē Bāhāḥ
31. Guji Bāhāḥ
32. Bu Bāhāḥ
33. Su Bāhāḥ
34. Dau Bāhāḥ
35. Yachu Bāhāḥ
36. Om Bāhāḥ
37. Jyo Bāhāḥ
38. Dhum Bāhāḥ
39. Si Bāhāḥ
40. Nyākhaḥcuk
41. Naha Bāhāḥ
42. Hyan Bāhāḥ
43. Yoku Bāhāḥ
44. Nāg Bāhāḥ (Ilanhe)
45. Atha Bāhāḥ
46. Mū Bāhāḥ
47. Yetā Bāhāḥ
48. Ikhāchē Bāhāḥ
49. Vaidya Bāhāḥ
50. Michu Bāhāḥ
51. Ī Bahī
52. Naka Bahī
53. Jyābā Bahī
54. Bheḷāchē twāḥ
55. Ī Bahī thūr
56. Saṅkhamūl
57. Mahabuddha



SCALE 1:5000
0 50 100 200 M

SACRIFICE, REGENERATION AND GIFTS: MORTUARY RITUALS AMONG HINDU NEWARS OF KATHMANDU

Rajendra Pradhan

Introduction

The Hindu Newars of Kathmandu, like many Hindu communities elsewhere, consider their whole life, and especially the life cycle rituals they undergo, as a preparation for death and, more importantly, life after death.¹ Further, they believe that in cremating the dead they are offering the corpse to the gods (cf. Pandey 1976; Stevenson 1971; Das 1977, 1981; Malamound 1983; Parry 1981, 1982). This is why it is essential that Hindus perform life cycle rituals (*samskaras*)², which purify them and confer on them the necessary social attributes so that when they die their bodies are suitable offerings to the gods³.

For the Hindus, death is not the final end because it leads to life in the other world as an ancestor, to other births in this world, and ultimately, absorption into the Great Absolute (*māhābrāhamana*) or the great Illusion (*mahāmāya*), i.e. liberation (*mukti/moksa*) from the endless cycle of rebirths in this illusory world (*samsāra*). Mortuary rituals are important means of marking this passage from one life to another, from one world to another.

Mortuary rituals mark the termination of the personhood of the deceased person as well as the (re)creation of a new personhood (Carter 1972:132). However, the termination is not instantaneous since death, i.e., social death, is recognised over a long, staggered period (Hertz 1960). Similarly, the recreation of the personhood of the deceased by the chief mourner, by means of the mortuary rituals and mourning practices, is also staggered over a number of days. If the mortuary rites are not 'correctly' performed, the deceased will forever remain a ghost (*preta*) and will not be incorporated as an ancestor (*pitr*), a terrible state for the spirit as well as for the living relatives whom it will trouble.

Although the chief mourner is the main actor in mortuary rituals, he needs to be assisted by his kin and affines, his funeral association (*si guthi*) members, and ritual specialists to be able to perform these rituals correctly. Like the chief mourner, the ritual specialists such as the Bhā

(Mahābrāhmaṇa), the Jogi (Kusle), the Karmācārya and the Brāhmaṇ mediate between the deceased (as ghost or ancestor) and the living. These ritual specialists receive gifts and fees in exchange for the services they provide and in addition they receive gifts on behalf of the deceased.

Mortuary rituals can be usefully analysed in terms of the tripartite structure of the rites of passage formulated by van Gennep (1977), Hertz (1960), Turner (1969), Douglas (1970) and in the Hindu case by Kaushik (1976) and Das (1977). Viewed thus, mortuary rituals may be conveniently divided into three phases which correspond to the three phases of the rites of passage. In the first phase, the body of the dead person is prepared as sacrificial offering and sacrificed on the funeral pyre. Rites of separation predominate in this phase. In the second phase, i.e., the liminal phase, the ghost (*preta*) of the deceased, which is disembodied and disarticulated (Das 1982: 144) is given a new body by the chief mourner. The liminal period is the most dangerous and polluting period for the mourners, who are set apart from the rest of the community. They have to be continuously on guard against the ghost of the deceased person and appease it by various offerings. In the third phase, the *preta* is incorporated as an ancestor by the *sapindikarana* ritual and worshipped as an ancestor, either separately or together with other ancestors. Correspondingly, the mourners are no longer in a liminal state or polluted, and they are reincorporated back into society. However, the mourners are still tainted with inauspiciousness for the whole year; they may not celebrate auspicious rituals such as marriage, initiation, or festivals such as Mohani (Nep. Dashain) and Swanti (Nep. Tihar). As is clear from above, there are many themes in Hindu mortuary rituals. Since it is not possible to discuss all the themes in this article due to space constraints, I will discuss three major themes, each theme in a separate section. In the first section, mortuary rituals are described from a rites of passage perspective, focusing on the termination and recreation of personhood. I argue that cremation is a form of sacrifice. In the second section, the relation between death pollution, mourning practices and the state of the deceased are discussed. I will argue that mourning practices not only express impurity, liminality and inauspiciousness but they are also means of (a) acquiring power to transform the *pret* into *pitri* and (b) of expiating the sin of cremating the deceased. In the third section, I describe the exchange of gifts and services between the chief mourner and the ritual specialists and between him and the deceased. I shall argue that (a) the ritual specialists, who mediate between the living and the dead, receive gifts on behalf of the deceased in addition to the gifts and fees they receive for their services and (b) the Mahābrāhmaṇ and not the Brāhmaṇ is seen as the absorber of the sin of the deceased.

MORTUARY RITUALS AS RITES OF PASSAGE

THE FIRST PHASE: PRELIMINAL STATE

The last moments and immediately after: Preparation of the body for cremation

Although everything possible is done to prolong the life of the dying man (including propitiation of different deities and spirits in consultation with religious specialists), it is believed that if his time is up (*kāl wa sāl*), as has been destined for him, nothing can save him.⁴ It is not uncommon to hear of old people awaiting death claim that they feel the presence of the messengers of Yamaraja, the lord of death, who have come to escort the dead to Yamaloka, the land of the dead. One of my informants related an incident he himself witnessed: One of his old uncles, lying on his death bed, shouted just before he expired, " *Kāl wala, kāl wala* [they] have come to take [me], [they] have come to take [me]".⁵ Commenting on this incident he remarked philosophically, " When one's Time comes (*kāl wa sāl*), what is there to do but surrender oneself voluntarily into their hands?" It is said that people who do this die peacefully.

If possible, gifts are presented to a Brāhman priest on behalf of the dying man to add to his store of religious merit (*dharma/punya*) and help him in the other world. The most important items of these gifts are gold and a cow. Ideally these gifts should be given by the dying person himself but if this has not been done, the chief mourner may give these gifts on his behalf. A gift of gold to a Brāhman purifies the donor from his sins (*pāpa*) while *gaudāna* (gift of cow) helps the deceased cross the dreaded Vaitarni river, en route to heaven. Because of the expense entailed, instead of real cows the Brāhmanas are given money in the ritually prescribed manner, similar to the gifting of a real cow.

The dying person is moved away from the auspicious and pure parts of the house because death and mortuary rituals are considered inauspicious and impure events and because the spirit (*preta*) of the deceased has a special affinity for the spot where the death occurred. Sometimes the dying man is carried to the cremation ground adjoining either the Paśupati temple, the Indranī temple or Pacali Bhairava temple, and laid supine on a *Brāhmanāla*. *Brāhmanāla* is a large slab of stone, half immersed in the river, on which dying persons are laid until they expire. The head of the stone is sculpted, depicting Viśṇu reclining on Ananata Nāga. Any person who dies lying on the *Brāhmanāla* is said to be freed from all his sins (*pāpa*). I have heard cases of old, dying people being taken to the Āryaghāt at Pashupati and even to Varanasi and brought back home after a few days or weeks when they did not die, only to pass away at home. This may be because though ideally, a

person should die by a sacred river,⁶ the Newars prefer to die at home surrounded by relatives, especially the womenfolk who are traditionally prohibited from attending the cremation. The dying man, however, is not allowed to pass away peacefully in his bedroom; on the contrary, as soon as it is known that he is dying, he is carried to the ground floor of the house (sometimes hurriedly and unceremoniously) and laid on a straw mat near the stairs. The ground on which the mat is laid is previously purified with cow dung. Great care is taken to ensure that the dying man does not come into contact with polluting objects or persons, such as menstruating women or impure castes, because he has to be as pure as possible at the moment of death.

The eldest son or the wife of the dying man pours a continuous stream of holy water (*jal*) at his feet. This act probably represents, as Nepali (1965:126) suggests, the placing of the dying man on a *Brahmanāla*, half immersed in the sacred river. Close relatives, especially women, pour *jal* (water from the different sacred rivers and ponds in Nepal and India such as Bāgmati, Viśṇumati, and the Ganges) into his mouth. This act, called *la twākegu* (offering water), is repeated at the cremation ground (*ghāt*) by the male mourners. These acts purify the body, enable the deceased to 'cross' (*tarejui*), and ensure water for the deceased in the other world. People who are not able to offer water to their dying or deceased relative consider themselves extremely unfortunate; I have heard people bemoan such a hapless fate.

Traditionally, an ayurvedic doctor (*ghāt vaidya*) attended on the dying person and it was he who announced the death of the person.⁷ It is believed that a person dies when his 'vital breath' (*prāṇvāyu*) leaves his body. People sometimes say "his *prāṇa* has left him" to refer to someone's death. It is not quite clear to me as to what else leaves the body along with the vital breath. One cannot find any clarity on the issue from the literature on death.⁸ The popular belief is that the soul (*ātmā*) leaves the body together with the vital breath at the moment of death. Another belief is that the soul leaves the body only when the funeral pyre is lit. According to one ritual expert, when very holy people are cremated, a dazzling light, the size of a thumb, emerges from the body and flies towards the sky. This light is the soul (*ātmā*).

It is widely believed that the *ātmā* can leave and re-enter the body at will, even during the lifetime of a person. This belief is aptly illustrated by the following story related to me by an old informant concerning a person he knew well. It was well known that this person's *ātmā* left his body and wandered around the city as soon as he was asleep. One night his friends decided to play a trick on him and disguised his body so well that the soul

did not recognise its own body when it returned in the morning. Consequently, the soul did not enter the body and the man died. Therefore even though the Newars may say, "his 'vital breath' has left him",⁹ to refer to someone's death, it seems that both the soul and the vital breath have to leave the body for a person to be considered dead.

The important point here is that it is not physical death but the social and ritual recognition and acceptance of it that is significant for the Newars. As among other communities, physical death may precede, as in the normal case, or follow, social death, as in the case of the renouncer who performs his own cremation during his ordination as renouncer (cf. Parry 1982). For the Newars, the crucial moment for ritual recognition of death is when the funeral pyre is lit by the chief mourner. As soon as the pyre is lit, the person being cremated is considered to be dead even in the rare cases where the person is not physically dead. If a person wakes up or shows signs of life after the pyre is lit, he/she is immediately killed and fully cremated. It is believed that spirits of other dead persons may occupy such a body.¹⁰ The *Gwās*, a sub-caste of Jyāpus who specialise in cremation, always carry staves and knives for such purpose. Informants cite many such cases that they have heard about, especially those which occurred thirty years ago or earlier. Strangely, most of these cases are of women who were believed to have died just before or during child birth. I have heard of only one case which occurred about ten years back. In another case, a woman who woke up after the pyre was lit was not killed but she was not accepted back into society and lived as an outcast. She was considered to be of lower status than the lowest, the Hālahulu, who is identified, at least in one festival (that of Gathā Muga), with evil spirits. On the other hand, if a person is believed to be dead but his body is not available for cremation, his horoscope and effigy are cremated and all essential mortuary rituals are performed. If such a person should return after his effigy has been cremated, he is not accepted back into society, for he is 'dead' to them. However, in some cases such persons may be accepted back after they becoming 'reborn' by performing again the full set of life cycle rituals, beginning with birth rituals.¹¹

Impure persons and things are not allowed to come in contact with the corpse. The persons who come in contact with the corpse, for example, relatives and the funeral association (*si guthi*) members, have to be of the same caste as the deceased. Others who carry the items required for the cremation, for example, the Jyāpus (farmer caste) are of pure caste. These precautions are taken because the corpse has to be pure to be a suitable offering to the gods. But at the same time, the corpse is considered impure and pollutes all who come in contact with it. Traditionally, all residents of

the building where a death had occurred were mildly polluted until the corpse was removed, even if they were not related to the deceased.

I am unable to say how the Newars resolve the apparent contradiction of the corpse being considered impure and, at the same time, a pure offering of the gods. Perhaps, as Das (1977:124) suggests, the dead body as matter is impure and the dead person as ghost (*preta*) is pure. The corpse as matter is destroyed at cremation. When the skull of the half burnt body is cracked, the ghost (*preta*) is released and offered to the gods. But as Parry (1981, 1982) points out, and this is also common among the Newars, the more popular view is that the *preta* leaves the body at the moment of death.

The women and children begin wailing as soon as they know that the person is dying but the men usually join them in wailing only when the person is believed dead. Through all the weeping and wailing, each calling out to the deceased, "Oh, father!", "Oh! mother!" as the case may be, the body is protected from evil spirits and pollution. Five burning wicks are placed around the body and an iron object placed on the corpse, to prevent evil spirits, including the spirit of the deceased (*preta*), from entering the body.

All the necessary activities required to cremate the body are performed not by the bereaved household but by other relatives and members of the funeral association (*si guthi*).¹¹ The deceased person's relatives and funeral association members are informed of the death as soon as possible to avoid delay in cremating the body, even if it be late at night. This is done not only because death is polluting and inauspicious, and because both the corpse and the living are susceptible to evil spirits but also because a decomposed and impure body is not a suitable offering to the gods.

A wider section of the community, in terms of friends, kin and affines and castes, are involved in mortuary rituals as compared to other life cycle rituals. This is because death is not only a private, domestic event, but also a public, cosmic event which necessitates direct relations with the unpredictable, cosmic forces. As many authors have pointed out, society seems threatened by the loss of one of its members and it has to be recreated in the face of this loss (Durkheim 1976; Das 1986; Bloch and Parry 1982).

The corpse is carefully prepared for cremation. After a lineage member (*phuki*) has washed the dead man's face, the seniormost male member (*thakāli*) of the funeral association or patrilineage (*phuki*) then applies vermilion on the deceased's forehead and ties his horoscope to his neck. This act is called *dukā pikā*. Then the married daughters of the deceased approach the dead body, weeping as they do so, and depart after placing some cotton on it. This act is called *phāngā tayegu* (to keep a shawl or quilt). Finally the corpse is wrapped in a loin cloth, tightly bound with a white cloth (*pongā*)

and then covered with a large cane mat (*ghoom*). Married women are wrapped in the saree which were given to them by their parents at marriage. These symbols, the horoscope, the loin cloth and the saree, recall the more auspicious rituals of birth, initiation and marriage, but only to highlight the reversal. For example, the horoscope which is cast at birth is burnt along with the dead man. However, there are other symbols which express the life of the deceased in other worlds (*loka*). For example, the cotton which the married daughters place on the corpse ensures that the deceased has a shawl or a quilt in the other world.

A simple *srāddha* (offerings of uncooked rice, flattened rice and curd) is performed to the spirit of the deceased person (*preta*) before the corpse is removed to the bier (*kwatā*). As described later, similar offerings are made to the deceased and to other spirits enroute to the cremation ground, and at the cremation ground itself, as a means of appeasing them.

A few members of the funeral association shift the corpse from the ground floor of the house to the bamboo bier placed just outside the main door or gate of the house. The corpse is completely covered with an embroidered shroud (*dewā*). The shroud belongs to the funeral association and is used whenever one of its members die. Puffed rice and vermilion are sprinkled on the shroud just as they would be showered on the cloth (*du*) covering the palanquin or car which carries the bride to the groom's house. Puffed rice and vermilion are symbols of life and auspiciousness. The corpse is about to be carried in the final procession of its life.

Just before the funeral procession leaves for the cremation ground an elderly woman of the household, or a Jyāpu woman traditionally employed by them, offers a garment which was used by the deceased person and the straw mat (*suku*) on which he breathed his last to the goddess of the crossroads, *chwāsa ajimā*. She has to cover her head with a shawl and weep from the moment she crosses the threshold of the house until she returns. Before entering the house she purifies herself with water. There is a marked contrast between the offerings made to the crossroad goddess at death and those made at birth or marriage. At birth the child's umbilical cord is offered to the goddess with joy and future expectations. At death the dead man's garment is offered with sadness and the realization that the future of the person has been terminated. These two offerings are just one of the ways of expressing auspicious and inauspicious events (cf. Das 1983:144).

The funeral procession: *sitā yenkegu*

Well defined customs and procedures help maintain some order amidst the sea of chaos caused by death. Society seeks to impose order not only because it cannot tolerate chaos but also because, as Hubert and Mauss

(1968) pointed out, everything to do with sacrifice (for cremation is a sacrifice) needs to be carefully organised lest dangerous forces become uncontrollable. As with other mortuary rites, in the funeral procession too, the order of the processionists, the route to be followed, the music to be played, and the acts to be performed, etc. are all regulated.

The funeral procession is led by a butcher (Nāy) and a farmer (Jyāpu) who play their musical instruments from the moment the procession begins until the pyre is lit by the chief mourner. They are followed by three or more farmers (Jyāpus). One of them carries the items required for the cremation - an earthen pot (*bhega*) which contains smouldering cow dung from which the pyre is lit, nine bundles of straw and reed, a pot and some *pujā* items. The second Jyāpu scatters puffed rice and vermilion along the procession route. The third, who, informants say, represents married daughters (one person, called *po whaley*, for each married daughter), scatters a mixture of husked and unhusked rice. The above processionists precede the bier carried by four funeral association members. The chief mourner and his brothers walk immediately behind the bier. They are followed by the patrilineage members (*phuki*) and consanguines, affines, friends and funeral association members. Brāhman priests usually do not accompany the funeral procession. When a married woman dies, her parents send a male representative to the procession but he has to return from the *ghāt* without watching the cremation. Women are strictly prohibited from joining the procession or going to the cremation ground.¹²

The funeral routes and the *ghāt* where the deceased is to be cremated are determined by the location of his traditional house and his caste.¹³ Deviation in the route or the cremation ground is not allowed without the prior permission from the Thaku juju (Thakuri king, the descendants of former chief or king of each locality) and the caretakers of the cremation grounds, the Pode, an untouchable caste, until a small fine is paid to them. The Podes have stopped funeral processions from proceeding to a different cremation ground until the fines were paid.

Different caste groups have specified places (*dip*) in the cremation grounds on which they build their funeral pyres. Low castes may not cremate their dead at the *dip* reserved for the higher castes. The higher castes do not cremate their dead at the *dip* of the lower castes for fear of polluting the corpse. These, and other rules relating to cremation, are enforced by the caretakers of the cremation grounds, the Pode, who receive a small fee and the leftovers from the cremation, such as the cane mat (*ghoom*) and the offerings to the deceased. The fee is shared with the Thaku juju.¹⁴ Traditionally, the former received twenty paisa and the latter sixty four paisa for the use of the cremation ground.

By the time the funeral procession reaches the cremation ground some of the funeral association members and the Gwā (a sub-caste of Jyāpus specialising in cremation) have prepared the funeral pyre (*sipha or citta*). The species of wood used for cremation and other sacrifices are similar.

The Cremation (*si uyegu*): Cremation as Sacrifice

Although the Hindu scriptural tradition and the people themselves consider death, and especially cremation, a sacrificial ritual (Pandey 1976; Stevenson 1971; Levin 1930), it is only recently that Indologists and anthropologists (Malamoud 1983; Das 1977, 1983; Parry 1981, 1982, 1985) have again focused their attention on this important theme. Das (1977:122-124), for example, points out that only those persons who are deemed to be suitable sacrificial victims may be cremated and shows parallels between cremation and sacrificial procedures.¹⁵ Among the Newars, ideally and traditionally, babies who have not undergone the *annaprāśana* ceremony, people who have been publicly executed for their crimes, girls who die during their 'menarche' seclusion (*bārhā tayegu*) and victims of accidental deaths may not be cremated for they are considered unsuitable to be offered to the gods. It could be said, following Malamoud (1983) and Das (1983:459-60) that in Hindu thought "death is the perfect sacrifice". Parry pursues this theme further and argues that cremation as a sacrifice regenerates life and maintains cosmic order; as he puts it, "cremation is cosmogony" (Parry 1982:76). Following the lead of these authors, I shall describe cremation rituals as a form of sacrifice.

After purifying themselves in the river, the mourners, including members of the funeral association, bring water in their cupped hands to offer to the deceased person. Starting with the youngest of the most distant mourner and ending with the chief mourner, they pour water into the mouth of the deceased person three times. Water is poured into their hands from a pot for the second and third offerings. This act of offering water to the deceased is called *la twankegu* (offering water). Then either the chief mourner or the Gwā performs a simple śrāddha while sitting on a piece of wood at the foot of the deceased. He offers three pindas consisting of pieces of flattened rice (*coka baji*), uncooked rice and curd, one to the spirit of the deceased, one to the crow and the last to the dog. The latter two are representatives of ancestors and death; in subsequent offerings of *pinda* to the dead person, the crow and the dog are also offered a share each. The Bhā (funeral priest) assists the chief mourner in these rituals. The chief mourner then circumambulates (*cāhilegu*) the pyre thrice clockwise (*nhekhātā*) and thrice anticlockwise (*akhatā*). (Some informants claim that he should circle the pyre only once, anticlockwise, but this seems to be a minority view). The

chief mourner then breaks the clay bowl on the wood he had sat on while offering the *pinda*.

Just as the victim in (animal) sacrifice is consecrated and offered food and water just prior to its immolation so too the deceased is offered food and water just before cremation (cf. Das 1977; Parry 1981, 1982).¹⁶ The chief mourner then, as the chief sacrificer, immolates the victim, the deceased, by lighting the body as an offering to the gods.

The smouldering cow dung in the clay pot, which is brought from the house of the dead person is re-kindled by adding straw and blowing on it. A bundle of straw and reed is lit from the fire.¹⁷ Holding the flaming torch in his right hand, the chief mourner (*mitaimha*: one who lights the fire) circumambulates the pyre clockwise and then anticlockwise, three times each, all the while weeping and calling out to the deceased: "Oh, father!" or "Oh, mother!", as the case may be. The eldest son is the chief mourner for the father and the youngest son for the mother. He then lights the pyre just below the head of the corpse (or in the mouth). As he does so, he is supposed to request the fire (Agni) to be happy with the offering and to take the dead person to heaven. The dead person is thus a sacrificial offering through the fire (Agni) to the gods.

The crucial moment of the cremation is when the chief mourner lights the pyre. As soon as the funeral pyre is lit, the musicians stop playing their instruments and the chief mourners as well as most of the processionists depart for home, after purifying themselves in the river. The Gwā and a few funeral association members stay back to actually burn the corpse properly and completely. They add combustible materials such as wood, straw, clarified butter and camphor to the pyre to hasten the cremation and to counteract the stench of the burning flesh. Impure objects such as mustard oil may not be used in the fire because they will pollute the sacrificial offering to the gods.

Once the corpse has been completely cremated, the chief mourner returns to the cremation ground to make an effigy of the deceased person with the ash from the pyre. He worships the effigy, offers food to it and then immerses it in the river.¹⁸ The body of the dead person is thus decomposed into the five basic elements of the universe. An urn of ash and bones are kept aside to be immersed in different rivers and *tirthas* (fords, pilgrim sites) in the Kathmandu Valley as well as India, for example, in Varanasi. The effigy making and its immersion could be interpreted as second 'burial' in Hertz's terms (Hertz 1960).

While cremation destroys the body of the dead person, it also helps in the regeneration of life. The theme of regeneration and fertility through sacrifice (and cremation) is a common theme in Hindu thought (cf. Parry 1982). In

the second phase of the mortuary rites, the body of the deceased person is re-created: this is clearly expressed in the rites of making and offering ten *pindas*, one each day, which is called *daskriya* (ten acts) by the Newars. As Parry (1981, 1982) has shown, the power to recreate the body is acquired through the ascetic practices which the chief mourner undertakes after cremation.

THE SECOND PHASE: LIMINAL STATE

Pinda dāna and the re-creation of the body

The second phase is the liminal phase in which the spirit (*preta*) of the dead person is 'disembodied and disarticulated' and correspondingly the mourners are in a liminal state (Das 1977, 1982; Kaushik 1976; Hertz 1970). Two kinds of rites are performed during this phase: first, rites performed by the chief mourner to re-create the body of the deceased; and second, purificatory rites. During this period all the households related to the deceased as kin or affines present the bereaved household gifts of food (mainly uncooked) as expression of their sympathy and concern (see Appendix I). These gifts are collectively called *bicā*, from *vichār yāyegu*, 'to think about', 'be concerned about'.

In this section I shall describe the rites performed by the chief mourner to re-create the body of the dead man.

The chief mourner and his brothers accompanied by a few helpers and the funeral priest (Bhā or Mahābrāhman), (or nowadays, because of the scarcity of the funeral priest, the Brāhman priest), visit the ghat for ten consecutive days after the cremation to make and offer *pindas* (balls of rice). The chief mourner performs the same acts and rituals every day. First, he bathes and changes into a lion cloth and then facing south, he boils rice in an earthen pot over raw bricks.¹⁹ The unbaked earthen pot, raw bricks and the direction south are associated with death. The boiled rice is allowed to cool in a basin. He then adds the five immortal fluids (*pancāmṛta*: cow's milk, curd, ghee, sugar and honey) and sweetmeats and bananas to the rice and mixes and kneads these food items. The mixture is moulded into three egg shaped *pindas* on which he sprinkles sesamum and black mustard seeds. The *pancāmṛta* represent the hands and feet as well as the nerves of the body, the seeds represent the black parts and the rice the rest of the body. He then worships the three *pindas* and Śiva, here referred to as Adikesvar Mahadev and represented by a small mound of wet clay. These three *pindas* are called *preta bali* (offerings to the spirit of the deceased person), *kāga bali* (offerings to the crow, who represents the ancestors) and *swana bali* (offerings to the dog, who represents Bhairava and Yamaraja).

It is believed that each day's *pinda* offerings to the departed person creates a specific limb of the body and by the tenth day the whole body is recreated. The body that is recreated is not the gross body (*sthula sarira*) but the subtle body (*suksma sarira*) of the deceased. This view, which is based on the scriptural tradition, is common among other Hindu communities (cf. Das 1977, Parry 1982; Inden and Nicholas 1977; Nicholas 1981; Dumont 1983). It is only on the tenth day that the *preta* is conscious that it is dead.

The tenth day is an important marker in the mortuary rituals: though the *preta* is not yet incorporated as an ancestor, it is no longer disembodied and disarticulated because of the body which has been recreated by the chief mourner. There is a corresponding change in the status of the mourners who are no longer in a dangerous conjunction with death, or in a liminal state. They begin the process of purification from death pollution. Further, the first phase of mourning is over on the tenth day but, as Dumont remarks, "mourning in a less intense form goes on for one year" (Dumont 1983:7).

The chief mourner offers *pindas* to the deceased on the eleventh, twelfth, thirteenth or fortyfifth day and every month for one year, and finally once a year. According to Dumont (1983:2) there are three types of *pinda* offerings: those made in the funeral rituals, those made in the ancestral offerings and the point where the two meet, at the *sapindikarana sraddha*. The *pindas* offered during the ten days of the mortuary rituals and those offered later differ in at least three significant ways. First, the *pindas* offered in the latter *sraddhas* are made from barley flour and not from boiled rice as in the earlier ones; second, from the thirteenth or fortyfifth day onwards, the *pindas* are offered on the ground floor of the house and not by the river; and thirdly, a Brahman priest presides over the latter *sraddhas*.²⁰

Other types of offerings, in addition to *pinda dāna*, are made to the deceased person, either directly or through an intermediary, such as the funeral priest, the Jogi (Kusle) or the Brāhman. These are items of food, water and other daily necessities such as clothes, shoes and cooking utensils. Some of these offerings are made by the chief mourners while other offerings are made by married daughters and affines as well as *phuki* members (See Appendix I).

THE THIRD PHASE: POST-LIMINAL STATE

Sapindikarana and ancestor worship

In the third phase the dead person is worshipped, not as a spirit (*preta*) but as an ancestor (*pitr*) but this is possible only if the *sapindikarana sraddha* is performed. Traditionally and according to the textual tradition, this was done on the first death anniversary but nowadays it is done on the thirteenth day,

or if the dead man was the head of the household, on the fortyfifth day (*latyā*), after cremation.

On the eleventh and the twelfth days the chief mourner performs *srāddhas* to the dead person at the cremation ground. Unlike in the *srāddhas* performed on the first ten days, the *pindas* for these two days are made of barley flour and not boiled rice, and sixteen instead of three *pindas* are offered.

Though the mourners are purified on the tenth day, the house of the deceased person is purified only on the twelfth day. The rituals performed to purify the house is called *ghasu* (from *ghar suddhi homa*: house purificatory (fire) sacrifice). Since Brāhman priests do not participate in such sacrifices which they consider inauspicious and impure, either a Karmacarya (actually a lower ranking sub-caste sometimes derogatorily called Ghasu or Preta Karmacarya) or a Vajracarya priest performs the sacrifice. The fire of the sacrifice is called Bhairavagni. The sacrifice which is performed on the ground floor purifies the house, subdues the malevolent spirits and brings peace (*śānti*) to the bereaved.

The house of the deceased person needs to be purified because the services of a Brāhman are required and he will not perform rituals in the house until it has been purified. The Brāhman performs these rituals on the thirteenth or fortyfifth day just before the *sapindikarana sraddha* is performed by the chief mourner. The rituals performed by the priest include a fire sacrifice (*homa*), worship of a water pot (*kalasa pūjā*), installation and 'giving life to' (*jivan pratistha*) a new image of Viśnu, which is later kept in the family shrine room, and the *Vrishotsarga* in which a bull calf is branded and set free. Poor families brand and 'set free' an effigy of a bull instead of a real bull.²¹

In the *sapindikarana sraddha*, the *preta* is incorporated as an ancestor in three stages. The chief mourner first makes and worships five *pindas* which are made of barley flour, *pancāmṛta* (cow's milk, curd, ghee, sugar and honey) sweetmeats and bananas. Three *pindas* represent the chief mourner's paternal grandfather, paternal great grandfather (FFF) and great great grandfather (FFFF), assuming that the deceased person is the father. The fourth is the *preta pinda* which is roughly three times the size of the other *pindas*. The fifth is the *vikal pinda* which represents the spirits of dead persons whose mortuary rituals have not been properly performed, for example, children or victims of accidental death. This *pinda* is kept separate from the other four *pindas*.

In the second stage, the chief mourner cuts the *preta pinda* into three equal parts with a gold and silver razor wrapped in *kusa* grass which he holds with both hands. He then joins the three parts of the *preta pinda* to the three *pindas* of the ancestors, one at a time. When this has been done, the *pinda* of the recently deceased father replaces the *pinda* of the paternal great great

grandfather (FFFF) of the chief mourner. The displaced ancestor becomes, for most occasions, part of the unnamed general category of ancestors, the *visve devha*. According to Dumont (1983:3) the term *visve devha* (all-the-gods) actually refers to the divine-fathers, i.e., the unnamed category of ancestors. Thus in the second stage the dead person is incorporated as a named ancestor, replacing his own great grandfather who is then incorporated as an unnamed ancestor. In short, as Dumont succinctly remarks, "The death of a man has thus moved down the entire structure formed by the officiating person (i.e., the chief mourner mentioned above) and his paternal ancestors by one generation" (1983:4).

In the third stage, the deceased person becomes incorporated as a part of the general category of ancestor, more specifically as a *sapinda* (those who share the same *pinda* (body)).²² The chief mourner joins the three separate, named ancestor *pindas* into one *pinda*, the general *pitr pinda*, and worships it again as in the first stage. He then worships the general *pitr pinda* separately on behalf of each of the related (*sapinda*) households. Henceforth the dead man will be worshipped both separately (in the annual *sraddhas*) and as a part of the general category of ancestors.

In addition to the monthly *srāddhas* and the first anniversary *sraddha* which ends the period of mourning, other rituals are performed on behalf of the deceased person to help him reach heaven. First, on the occasion of the 'Cow Festival' (Sāpāru), the chief mourner parades a cow, or a young boy dressed as a cow, along the festival route of the city and later gifts a cow to the family priest. This helps the ancestor cross the dreaded Vaitarni river to reach heaven. Second, on the first day of Indra Jatra, the family members of the deceased circumambulate the outer perimeter of the city (known as *upākhū wanegu*). And third, they visit the different *lingas* around Pasupati, on *Bāla cahre* day (cf. Pradhan 1986). All these rituals and gifts (*dānas*) given to Brahman priests are to help the deceased person reach heaven and to have a better rebirth.

DEATH POLLUTION, MOURNING AND THE STATE OF THE DECEASED PERSON

The close correspondence between the state of the deceased and that of the mourners, which Hertz (1960) noted, has been demonstrated for many societies, including those in South Asia (cf. Bloch and Parry 1982; Huntington and Metcalf 1979; Parry 1980, 1985; Kaushik 1976; Das 1977, 1986). In the Hindu case, both the dead person's ghost (*preta*) and the mourners are in a liminal state until the *preta* is incorporated as an ancestor (*pitr*). The impurity of the mourners, which expresses their liminal state,

ends with the incorporation of the *preta* as an ancestor. However, death is conceived to be both an impure and an inauspicious event (Das 1977). The inauspiciousness associated with death extends beyond the liminal phase till the dead person reaches its final destination. Inauspiciousness, in the case of death, is expressed by mourning. I shall argue, following Parry (1981, 1982), that the chief mourner observes certain restrictions to acquire the power to re-create the body for the ghost (*preta*) of the dead man, and as a means of expiation for the sin of cremating (sacrificing) the dead body.

Though death pollution (*dumā*) for all categories of mourners begins at the same time,²³ the intensity of pollution and mourning vary according to the state of the deceased and the relation of the mourners to the dead person. The successive terminations of pollution and taboos on different grades of mourners are marked by different rituals (cf. Srinivas 1952; Dumont and Pocock 1959; Das 1977, 1986). For example, if a pre-initiated child dies, only four days of mourning and pollution are observed by close mourners. Similarly, married daughters and pre-initiated grand children of the dead man observe only four days of mourning and pollution. If the head of the household dies, ten days of pollution are observed by his patrilineage but close mourners (widow, unmarried daughters and married or unmarried sons) observe a less intense form of mourning for a year.

Among other Hindu communities the corpse as well as the mourners are considered polluted when the dead person's vital breath (*prāṇavāyu*) leaves the body. The scriptural tradition and the popular belief differ as to when the vital breath leaves the body; according to the former, it leaves the body when the chief mourner cracks the skull of the half burnt body (*kāpal-kriyā*); according to the latter, the vital breath leaves the body at the moment of physical death. In either case, pollution of the corpse and the mourners begin at the same moment (Das 1977; Parry 1981, 1982). Among the Newars, however, the body of the dead person is considered impure as soon as he is believed to be dead but death pollution (*dumā*) for the mourners begins the moment the five wicks surrounding the corpse are lit soon after death. As in the pollution of birth and menarche seclusion described earlier, there is a time difference between the pollution of the subject of the rituals and his or her relatives.

The mourners rid themselves of death pollution on the tenth day, the males by the river and the females at home. The purificatory rites they perform are known as *du benkegu*, ('to purify oneself from death pollution'). The chief mourner has his head shaved and, if the deceased is the head of the household, his eyebrows and moustache too, by a barber. He then bathes three times in the river: first, after rubbing mustard cake (*khau*) on his body; second, after applying a paste of barley and mustard oil (*kwā chikā*); and,

finally, after having his toe nails pared and then applying *amba* (a fruit) and mustard seeds. The Brāhman priest then sprinkles him with the five products of a cow (*pancagavya*): cow's milk, urine, dung, curd and ghee). Finally he changes into new, white cotton clothes presented to him by his affines (usually bride-givers, and sometimes bride-receivers, to the chief mourners). His soiled clothes are given to the barber. Similar procedures are followed by other close mourners.

Bathing, tonsure and changing into new clothes express change of status and separation of one state from another. In death purificatory rites, these acts express the end of their impure and liminal state. The mourners are freed from most of the taboos they had to observe for the previous nine days (taboos on eating certain categories of food, such as meat, onions, garlic, on performing auspicious rituals; or enjoying themselves). But, as in other Hindu communities, "mourning in a less intense form goes on for one year" Dumont (1983:7). The first grade mourners, especially the household members of the deceased, have to observe a few taboos for the whole year. For example, they may not celebrate any auspicious rituals, such as marriage, or participate in any festival except those related to death, for instance, the Cow festival (*Sāpāru*); and the clothes, shoes, shawls or umbrellas they use, must be white in colour. Further, milk is tabooed for the children of the deceased if the deceased was their mother and curd if he was their father. It is only after the *srāddha* performed on the first anniversary of death that the first grade mourners are freed from all taboos and they are fully integrated into society. This change is signalled by the chief mourner and his brothers wearing coloured clothes.

As Das (1977, 1982) has suggested, death is an event which is considered both impure and inauspicious. Impurity symbolises liminality, i.e., "it marks off the events in which man experiences his social world as separate from the cosmic world" (Das 1977:126). The impurity of death is fully terminated only when the liminal category of *preta* is incorporated as an ancestor (*pitr*). Though the mourners rid themselves of death pollution on the tenth day when the *preta* has a fully recreated body, the close mourners are still mildly polluted until the *preta* is incorporated as an ancestor (see Table I).

However, mourning, which like pollution begins from the moment of death, goes on for a year. The tenth day marks the end of the first phase of mourning, and the thirteenth or forty fifth day the second phase. The mourners are marked off from the rest of society by the restrictions they observe not only because they express sorrow for the loss of one of their members but also because they are too closely associated with death. As Das (1986) has so persuasively argued, one of the main functions of

mourning is to ensure the correct mediation between life and death. By observing the restrictions imposed on them, such as wearing white clothes and not celebrating auspicious rituals, the mourners neither deny death nor are too closely associated with life. Life and death are kept apart but at the same time mediated by the mourners. When the dead person reaches his/her final destination, the close mourners are freed from their identification with death and they may then resume their pursuit of auspicious life.

Table I: Relation between the state of the deceased and the mourners

Day	State of the deceased	State of the mourners
THE FIRST PHASE (Pre-liminal state)		
Death / cremation	separation of body and <i>ātmā</i> ; destruction of the body	beginning of pollution and mourning and separation from society
THE SECOND PHASE (Liminal state)		
1st - 9th day	the <i>preta</i> is disembodied and disarticulated	intense pollution and mourning; susceptible to danger from the <i>preta</i>
10th day	<i>preta</i> with recreated body	end of death pollution and the first phase of mourning; close mourners still mildly polluted and observe some restrictions
THE THIRD PHASE (Post-liminal state)		
12th day	as above	house purificatory rites (<i>ghasu</i>) performed; all mourners except the widow and children of the deceased are freed from food taboos.
13 or 45th day	the <i>preta</i> is incorporated as an ancestor (<i>pitr</i>)	all categories of mourners are freed from pollution; close mourners continue to be marked off as inauspicious; they may visit temples and worship deities but may not celebrate/ participate in auspicious rituals and festivals.
First anniversary	the deceased reaches the final destination	end of all mourning and taboos; reincorporation into society.

Mourning practices: regeneration of the body and expiation for the sin of cremation.

The restrictions observed for the first ten days are called *du cwanegu* or *dukhā cwanegu* (to mourn). The mourners are prohibited from eating certain categories of food, such as meat garlic, onions and salt; from celebrating auspicious rituals, such as marriage or initiation; and any form of

entertainment. They may also not shave or have their nails pared, and women must keep their hair loose. All of these restrictions express the liminal state of the mourners (Das 1977: 127).

Among all the mourners, the chief mourner (*mitaimha*: the one who lights the pyre) and his brothers observe the most severe restrictions. The chief mourner and his brothers live like ascetics for ten days. In addition to the observances followed by other close mourners, they have to live on the ground floor or the courtyard of the house, in an area specially enclosed, to which others do not have access. They are confined to this area for ten days except to answer calls of nature or to visit the cremation ground to offer *pindas* to the deceased. The chief mourner and his brothers have to cook food (mainly boiled rice) themselves, eat only one meal a day, and avoid contact with any impure objects. They have to remain as pure as possible. Moreover, they may not sleep on mattresses or use pillows; comb their hair or have their toe nails or hair cut; or participate in any rituals except those relating to death.

As other scholars have noted, the practices observed by the mourners resemble those of the renouncers (cf. Dumont 1971; Das 1977; Parry 1981). Dumont notes but does not explain why mourners observe these practices. Das explains these only in terms of the liminal status of both the renouncers and the mourners (Das 1977:126). But as Parry (1981, 1982) argues, the chief mourner takes on the role of the ascetic for two reasons: first, to acquire the power to re-create a body for the deceased by performing austerities (*tapasyā*) and, second, as a means of expiation for cremating (sacrificing) the dead person. Similar views have been expressed by my informants, though they use a different idiom. As one of my learned Brāhman informants put it, "The chief mourner (*mitaimha*) has to perform *vrata* (observances of vows of fast and penance) to re-create the body he has destroyed in cremation".

While an ascetic gains power by performing austerities, a householder achieves similar results by performing a *vrata* in honour of a deity, such as Śiva, Viṣṇu or Durgā. In other words, *vratas* are the householder's substitute for the austerities of an ascetic. It is believed to be possible, for example, to convert a *preta* (ghost) into a ancestor (*pitr*) by performing the *Saptāhā vrata* (the observance of vows for seven days). For this *vrata*, the *Srimad Bhāgavat Purāṇ* is recited by a priest and Viṣṇu is worshipped for seven consecutive days. The *Saptāhā Vrata* is usually performed when there is an accidental death or suicide and the ghost (*preta*) of the dead person troubles the living because proper mortuary rituals were not performed. I know of three such cases, one of suicide and two of accidental death for which the *Saptaha Vrata* was performed.

But even for normal deaths, the chief mourner observes rules which are similar to those observed by an ascetic or a person performing a *vrata*. As in other *vratas*, a Brāhman priest recites a sacred text in honour of a deity. For death, the priest recites the *Preta Khanda* (the section of the ghost) of *Garuḍ Purāṇ* for nine evenings. The main god of the text is Viśnu. The chief mourner observes the rules similar to some *vratas* to acquire the power to re-create the body of the dead person.

There is another reason why the chief mourner observes such rules. If cremation is a sacrifice, as I have tried to show, then the chief mourner, as the sacrificer, must undergo purificatory and other rites to expiate himself of the sin of immolating the victim. Hubert and Mauss had observed, "The purifications which the sacrificer had to undergo after the sacrifice resembled moreover the expiation of a criminal" (Hubert and Mauss 1968:33). My informants have never explicitly made the connection between the 'ascetic' practices of the chief mourner and his expiation for the sin of cremating the deceased ('the sin of burning the body hairs of the deceased') as Parry's informants have done (Parry 1982:79). But some of the practices that the chief mourner undertakes resemble those of other expiatory (*prāyascit*) rites (cf. Hoffer 1979:185-190). I had mentioned earlier that according to some of my informants, the *bārhā tayegu* ritual (menarche seclusion) is a *vrata* in honour of Suryanārayana, one of the forms of Viśnu, and it is performed by girls to liberate themselves from the sin of menstruation (*rajasola pāpa mochana*). Some of the observances that the chief mourner undertakes is similar to those imposed on the girl in seclusion.

In short, the mourning practices and the restrictions imposed on the chief mourner(s) on the one hand express impurity, liminality, and inauspiciousness and on the other hand are practices undertaken to regenerate the body of the deceased and expiate the sin of cremating a body.

Gifts, services and sin: the roles of the ritual specialists and the chief mourner in mortuary rituals

In his discussion of the funeral priests of Banares, Parry (1980) questions Dumont's (1970) formulation of the relation between the renouncer, Brāhman, priest and purity. According to Dumont (1970) the categories of the Brāhman and the renouncer are opposed as man-in-the world is opposed to the world renouncer. Brāhmans are best represented by priests who, in turn, are equated with purity. Following Heesterman (1964, 1971) Parry argues that the ideal Brāhman is not a priest but a renouncer. Like the renouncer, the Brāhman should be independent from the material and social world; in other world, both the renouncer and the Brāhman represent transcendence. The Brāhman's superiority is based not on priesthood, as

Dumont argues, but on transcendence. However, the Brāhman has to enter into transactions with his patrons and receive gifts from them for his material ends. Parry argues that this relationship with the patrons compromises the Brāhman's status because all gifts (*dāna*) are debilitating. In Parry's words, "...*dān(a)* is bad not just because it subverts their (the Brāhmans') ideal ascetic independence, but more importantly because the acceptance of *dān(a)* involves the acceptance of the sins of the donour" (brackets supplied; Parry (1980:103). The Brāhman who acts as a priest is similar to a person of impure caste in that while the latter removes the 'biological impurities' of his patrons, the former removes the 'spiritual impurities' of his patrons by taking their sins upon himself. Because a priest has to accept gifts from his patrons, his status is equivocal and "he is seen not so much as the acme of purity as an absorber of sin" (ibid:89).

Parry's theory can be questioned on several grounds. First, as Das (1977) has already demonstrated, the relation between the renouncer and the Brāhman is not only that of similarity or opposition but of both similarity (parallelism) and opposition. When the category Brāhman is opposed to the householder, it is similar to the renouncer but when it is opposed to the renouncer, it is similar to the householder. Thus the category Brāhman has the characteristic of both the householder and the renouncer because it mediates between these two categories, which stands respectively for the social and the asocial.

Secondly, and more specifically, Parry's theory that the Brāhman is seen not so much as an acme of purity but as an absorber of sin needs to be modified in the light of ethnographic evidence. Parry lumps together the impure and inauspicious funeral priest (Māhābrāhman) and the pure Brāhman priest under the general category of the Brāhman even though he admits there are significant differences between them in terms of their functions and associations. For instance, he writes, that the Māhābrāhmans "are regarded as *bona fide* Brāhmans - albeit as *pret(a)* Brāhmans", and a Māhābrāhman "is after all a Brāhman, although undeniably an ill-omened one" (Parry 1980:93-94). Further, while the funeral priest receives gifts offered in the name of the *preta* (ghost), the Brāhman priest (*purohita*) accepts gifts in the name of the ancestor (*pitr*) (ibid. 91-92); the funeral priest represents and is identified with the *preta* and the *purohita* with the ancestor. I shall show that the differences between the two categories of specialists are so fundamental that it would be misleading to categorise both as Brāhmans. I shall argue that it is not the Brāhman priest (*purohita*) but the funeral priest (Bhā) who is seen as the paradigmatic absorber of sin.

Further, Parry states that his data and theory contradicts Mauss' theory of gifts because *dāna* does not evoke counter-presentations. I shall argue that he

does not seriously consider Mauss' observations that, (a) counter-presentations need not always be in the form of material things (1970:28), and (b) gifts may be given to a person on the condition that it is transmitted to a third party (1970:22). I suggest that we need to differentiate between, first, the proximate and the ultimate ('the third party') recipient of the gifts; second, the time and occasion of the gifts; and third, the kinds of gifts given and returned. I shall argue later that the gifts given by the chief mourner to the dead person are not so much presentations as counter-presentations.

It is quite clear from my ethnography presented above and from Parry's (1982) own discussion that the funeral priest and the Brāhman priest have different roles in the mortuary rituals and that they represent and are identified with different aspects of the deceased.²⁴ The funeral priest performs his services and receives gifts on behalf of the deceased person only for the first ten days after death, i.e., while the deceased is still a *preta*. The funeral priest (Bhā) represents and, at times, is identified with the *preta*. The Brāhman, on the other hand, though he performs some ritual services, receives gifts on behalf of the deceased person only after the tenth day (see Table II). More specifically, he accepts gifts only on behalf of the ancestor or a living person, but not on behalf of the *preta*. Although the Brāhman recites the *Garuḍa Purāṇa* for the first nine days after cremation, he does not accept any *dakṣinā* (ritual fee) or *dāna* for this service for the first ten days. And usually it is not the family priest (*purohita*) but another Brāhman priest who recites the text.

The difference between the Bhā (funeral priest) and the Brāhman is clearly illustrated by the case of the *sayyā* (or *sajjā*) *dāna* (gifts of material required for daily necessities). Though virtually the same items are presented to the funeral priest and the Brāhman, the time, place and the ultimate and proximate recipient of the gifts differ. The funeral priest is presented cooked food and *sayyā dāna* offered to the *preta* (kept in a locked room the previous night) on the eleventh morning before sunrise, on the threshold of the house. The gift of *sayyā dāna* is given by the eldest married daughter, the proximate donor, on behalf of the chief mourner, the ultimate donor. Though it is the Bhā (funeral priest) who receives the gift, the ultimate recipient is the ghost (*preta*) of the dead person. This gift, sometimes called *Māhābrāhman dāna*, is the culmination of the series of gifts to the *preta*, for which the Māhābrāhman acts as the intermediary between the *preta* and the bereaved family. The Brāhman is presented *sayyā dāna*, on the ground floor of the deceased only after the *preta* is incorporated as *pitr*. This gift is a part of other gifts he will receive on behalf of the ancestor from the chief mourner, and gifts made on behalf of the deceased by the chief mourner.

Table II: Gifts, services and the state of the deceased

Time	Bhā (Māhābrāhman)	Jogi (Kusle)	Kamāchārya	Brāhman
Pre-death	-	-	-	receives gifts of cow and gold
Death ¹	helps in cremation, and <i>srāddha</i>	-	-	-
Days 1-10 a) rituals	helps in the offering of <i>pinda dānas</i> to the <i>preta</i>	-	-	recites the <i>Garuda Purana</i> ; sprinkles purifying agents on the mourners on the tenth day
b) gifts	cooked food and <i>sayyā dāna</i> meant for the <i>preta</i>	all cooked food meant for the <i>preta</i>	-	-
12th day	-	-	performs the house purificatory (<i>ghasu</i>) sacrifice	-
13/45th day a) rituals	-	-	helps the Brāhman in the rituals	performs rituals to pure gods, presides over the <i>sapindakaraṇa sraddha</i>
b) gifts	-	cooked food meant for the ancestor	<i>paduka dāna</i> (gift of wooden sandals, etc.)	<i>paduka dāna</i> ; <i>sayya dāna</i> ; <i>sida dāna</i> ; <i>gau dāna</i> ; and other gifts
monthly/ annual a) <i>sraddha</i>	-	-	helps the Brāhman	presides over the <i>sraddha</i>
b) gifts	-	cooked food meant for the ancestor	?	various <i>dānas</i> ; feast on behalf of the ancestor

Note

1. The Gwā (sub-caste of Jyāpu specialising in cremation) helps the chief mourner in the cremation. The Ghāt Vaidya (traditional ayurvedic doctor who tends the dying persons) announces the death of his patient.
2. The barbers shaves, tonsures and pares the nails of the mourners.

There are two other categories of ritual specialists who receive gifts on behalf of the dead man.²⁵ The Karmacarya priest (derogatorily called Ghasu (house purificatory) or Preta Karmacarya) deals with the ghost, (*preta*), (in the *ghasu homa* ritual) but receives *pādukā dāna* (gifts of wooden sandals, umbrella, cloth, and water pot) on the day the *preta* is incorporated as an ancestor. The Kusle receives gifts of cooked food meant for the *preta*, and when it is incorporated as an ancestor, for the ancestor. The Karmacarya and the Kusle are thus intermediate categories between the Bhā and the Brāhman in that they either deal with or represent both the *preta* and the *pitr* (See Table II).

The differences between these ritual specialists can be seen in other contexts. The Brāhman is associated with benevolent cosmic forces, such as Viśṇu, Śiva, Kumāri, and with auspicious rituals, such as marriage and initiation. The Bhā, on the other hand is associated only with the ten days of death rituals, the most polluting and inauspicious phase of the mortuary rituals. As far as I know, he has no other ritual function. The Kusle is often associated with the negative forces of the sacred, such as *preta* and other evil spirits; and he is believed to possess powerful 'wrong/bad' knowledge (*kuviddyā*). His patron god is Śiva in his fierce aspects. He 'heals' patients. But the Kusles are also musicians in many temples such as Paśupati, Taleju and Cāngu Nārāyan. The (Ghasu) Karmācārya is associated with ambiguous or malevolent forces such as *preta* or the blood-thirsty gods or goddess. He assists the Brāhman in auspicious rituals. One of his main functions on such occasions is to worship *pitha* deities and offer animal sacrifice.

Parry's theory that the priest is seen not as the acme of purity but as an absorber of sin, which in the Hindu context also has the connotation of pollution (cf. Hubert and Mauss 1968), is valid not so much for the Brāhman but for the Bhā (funeral priest), and to a lesser extent, to the Kusle and the (ghasu) Karmācārya. These two categories of priests (with the Kusle and the (Ghasu) Karmacarya as intermediate categories) have different roles in rituals and are associated with different aspects of death. The Bhā is considered to be, to use Parry's term, the 'acme' of pollution and inauspiciousness, whereas the Brāhman, even though he participates in the inauspicious *śraddhas* is considered the acme of purity and auspiciousness for it is he who presides over auspicious rituals, including marriage, initiation and *vrddhi* or *mangala* (auspicious) *śraddha*.

Parry further (1982) contends that, at least in the case of the gifts presented to the priests, his theory contradicts Mauss' (1970) because no counter-presentations are returned. But then he goes on to state, "Nothing is returned precisely because the gift is - as it were - its own counter-presentation, for it relieves the donor of death, impurity and sin" (ibid:105).

But as Mauss (1970) pointed out, and this is implied in Parry's own statement, counter-presentations need not always be material things: "Return of presentations of all kinds, of goods and services, fall into the same categories" (ibid:28). This is especially true in the system of gift exchanges between devotees and gods. According to some informants, Brāhmanas are representatives of Viṣṇu or earth (just as the king is, but in a different way). Giving them gifts is similar to giving gifts to Viṣṇu. The act of giving gifts to the Brāhmanas is said to earn merit (*dharmapunya*) to the donor, just as worshipping gods, visiting sacred places or observing vows (*vrata*) earns merit for the performer of these activities. At least among the Newars, giving gifts (*dāna*) is part of other religious activities which earn merit for the person who gives gifts or performs religious activities. Giving gifts to the funeral priest or the Kusle or performing propitiatory rituals to evil spirits or malevolent deities do not have the same positive connotations of earning merit as giving gifts to a Brāhman or worshipping benevolent gods. By concentrating on the absorption of sins Parry overlooks the more positive aspect of giving gifts to the Brāhman.

Parry also sometimes assumes that the proximate and the ultimate recipients of gifts are the same person. This may be true in some cases where the donor gives gifts to the Brāhmanas for his own benefit. But there are other occasions where, as Mauss pointed out, gifts are given on the condition that they are "used on behalf of, or transmitted, to a third party, the remote partner..." (Mauss 1970:22). In the case of gifts after death, the ritual specialists are only proximate recipients.²⁶ The ultimate recipient of these gifts ('the third party') is the dead person, either as ghost (*preta*) or ancestor (*pitr*). Parry (1980, 1985) is aware of this fact as can be seen from his description of the gifts given to the ritual specialists. However, he overlooks some significant differences between the funeral priest and the Brāhman as proximate recipient of gifts.

Gifts are given to the funeral priest (Bhā) and the Kusle after they have been offered to the ghost (*preta*) of the deceased. They receive, as it were, the left-overs of food which has been consumed by the *preta* here on earth. The Kusle also receives food offerings which have been 'consumed' by the ancestors here on earth. As we have seen, the Kusle receives the share of feast offerings to the ancestors, the next day. The *sayyā dāna* (articles of daily necessities) are given to the funeral priest, the next morning, after, as my informants emphasize, the *preta* makes use of them during the night. It is in this sense that though the funeral priest and the Kusle are the proximate recipients of the gifts, the *preta* is the ultimate recipient.

The Brāhmanas and on some occasions, the (Ghasu) Karmācārya, are the proximate recipients of gifts, which they receive on behalf of the ultimate

recipient, the deceased as an ancestor (*pitr*). The gifts given to these two proximate recipients are simultaneously transmitted to the ancestor. 'Left-overs' may not be given either to the ancestors or the Brāhman. Giving gifts to the Brāhman, and to a lesser extent, to the Karmacarya, earns merit for the donor and for the ancestor on whose behalf they are given. The Brāhman transmits these gifts to the ancestors to be used in the other world. For example, in giving a gift of a cow (*gau dāna*) to the Brāhman, both the chief mourner, and the ancestor on whose behalf he gives the gifts, benefit in that both earn merit (*dharmapunya*). At the same time, the Brāhman transmits the cow to the ancestor so that he can cross the dreaded Vaitarni river to reach the land of the dead, Yamaloka. But unlike the Bhā (funeral priest), the Brāhman is often the ultimate recipient of gifts, such as when the donor gives him gifts for his own benefit (merit) on auspicious rituals.

From the Newar case, it is possible to suggest that the Brāhman priest (the *purohita*) and the funeral priest (Bhā) should not be lumped together under the general category of Brāhman without emphasizing the significant differences between them. As I suggested earlier, the funeral priest and the Brāhman priest are associated with different aspects of death and other ritual activities. As Parry (1980:93) himself notes, the funeral priest is considered both impure and inauspicious. Although the Brāhman priest removes the impurity of his patrons and presides over the inauspicious *sraddha* rituals, these are not the main services he provides to his clients. I suggest that it is only the funeral priest and not the Brāhman priest who is considered to be the paradigmatic example of the remover of sin. The funeral priest absorbs the sins of the dead person when he eats a small portion of his skull on the morning of the eleventh day. A Brāhman priest would never agree to eat such food which is loaded with the sins of the deceased person.²⁷ If the funeral priests are not available, which is usually the case nowadays, the gifts which they traditionally receive are given not to the Brāhman but to the Kusle or thrown in the river.

I am not suggesting that the Brāhman priest never absorbs the sins of his patrons by the act of accepting their gifts. To do so would be going against all available evidence (cf. Gonda 1975; Heesterman 1964; 1985; Parry 1980). But emphasizing only this aspect of gifts and role of the Brāhman is to distort the nature and function of gifts, and the position of the Brāhman within the structural order of Hinduism (cf. Das 1977). If we are to follow Parry's suggestion we must consider the king too as primarily an absorber of sins for, according to the Hindu theory of kingship, "In the course of his rule the king not only incurred certain sins but he was also said to absorb from his subjects the same proportions of sins and merit as he collected revenue from their standing crops" (Burghart 1984:105). The king, however,

is not seen primarily as an absorber of sins of his subjects. Similarly a Brāhman priest cannot be seen primarily as an absorber of sins of his patrons.

Conclusion: presentations and counter-presentations

To conclude, I would like to suggest that the gifts which the chief mourners and others give to the dead person either directly as in the *pinda dānas* or indirectly through the ritual specialists are not only presentations but also, perhaps more importantly so, counter-presentations. From a short term perspective, these gifts are means of appeasing the *preta*, and in the case of ancestors, of honouring and worshipping him or her. From a long term perspective, these gifts may be considered as counter-presentations of the gifts of life, food and material things which the dead parents gave their children.

The parents give life to their children; create the body necessary for the soul (*ātmā*) to be reborn; care for them; feed, cloth and house them; and perform the necessary *samskāras* for them. When the parents die, the children, in turn, cremate them; re-create a body for the dead person; incorporate the ghost (*preta*) as an ancestor, provide gifts of food and materials required in the other world as an ancestor; and help the deceased reach his ultimate destination by performing the necessary mortuary rituals and giving gifts. Thus the whole series of gifts and rituals performed when a person dies are delayed counter-presentations by the chief mourner to the deceased father or mother for the gifts of life and other gifts which he received from his parents. In a more general sense, as some scholars (Malamoud 1983; Parry 1985) have pointed out, these gifts are means of paying off the debts owed to the ancestors.

APPENDIX I GIFTS AT DEATH

#	TIME/ OCCASION	PLACE	DONOR	RECIPIENT		ITEM (S)	REMARKS
				PROXIMATE	ULTIMATE		
1	Prior to death	home	dying man	Brāhman	the deceased	cow and gold	the cow helps the deceased cross the Vaitarini river; the cow and the gold, earn merit for the donor
2	Time of death	home	relatives of the dying person	the dying person	the dying person	water	purification of the corpse; water in the next world
3	After death	home	married daughters of the deceased	the deceased	the deceased	cotton	a quilt or shawl in the next world
4	After death	home	chief mourner	the deceased person's <i>preta</i>	the <i>preta</i>	curd, flattened rice	appeasing the <i>preta</i>
5	Before the funeral procession	at the crossroad	old woman of the household	goddess of the crossroad		old clothes; straw mat on which the person died	
6	Funeral procession	en route	married daughters' representatives	spirits	spirits	puffed rice/paddy	appeasing the spirits
7	Funeral procession	crossroad outside the city	Jyāpu on behalf of the chief mourner	the deceased	the deceased	raw bricks	to build a house in the other world
8	Before cremation	<i>ghat</i>	all mourners	the deceased	the deceased	water	water for the next world
9	Before cremation	<i>ghat</i>	chief mourner	cow, dog, the deceased	the deceased, ancestor	curd, flattened rice	<i>śraddha</i> performed
10	Cremation	<i>ghat</i>	chief mourner	Agni	all the gods and Yama	the body of the deceased	cremation as sacrifice
11	After cremation	outside the house of the deceased	old woman	mourners returning from the <i>ghat</i>	evil spirits	<i>ginger/ flattened rice (broken pieces)</i>	appeasing evil spirits
12	For ten days a) daily	<i>ghat</i>	chief mourner and his brothers	dog, crow, <i>preta</i>	<i>preta</i>	<i>pindas</i> (rice balls)	food offering to the <i>preta</i> ; recreating the body of the deceased

	b) daily	home	kin and affines	Kusle	<i>preta</i> of the deceased	cooked food	food 'consumed' by the <i>preta</i> ; given to the Jogi the next morning
	c) daily	home	kin and affines	bereaved household	bereaved household/ <i>preta</i>	cooked and uncooked food	<i>bicā</i> (food offered to express sympathy)
13	Sixth evening (<i>lo-cha</i>)	home	married daughters	Jogi	<i>preta</i> of the deceased	flattened rice, and other food	<i>preta</i> consumes the food
14	Seventh morning (<i>nhe-numa</i>)	home	married daughters	Jogi (Kusle)	<i>preta</i>	seven shares of food	<i>preta</i> consumes the food
15	Seventh evening (<i>Pakhā jā</i>)	home	married daughters, kin and affines	goddess of the crossroad	<i>preta</i>	boiled and flattened rice	<i>preta</i> consumes the food
16	Tenth morning	a) ghāt	chief mourner and brothers	barber	barber	clothes worn by the mourners for the ten days	pollution is over but mourning continues; white here symbolises liminality and inauspiciousness
		b) ghāt	affines	chief mourner and brothers	chief mourners and brothers	white clothes to be worn for the rest of the year	
17	Tenth night (<i>Jāpo khā wanegu</i>)	<i>ghāt</i>	chief mourner	<i>preta</i>	<i>preta</i>	water, milk, boiled rice, flattened rice; needle without eye; six steps ladder	
18	Tenth night/eleventh morning	home	married daughters of the deceased person	a) Bhā \ Kusle	<i>preta</i>	eleven shares of cooked food for each person	

				b) Bhā		<i>kattoo</i> (crushed skull pieces mixed with food)	the Bhā is identified with the <i>preta</i>
				c) Bhā	the <i>preta</i>	<i>sayyā dāna</i> (all items necessary for daily life)	
19	13/ 45th day	home	a) chief mourner	the deceased	the deceased	<i>pinda/</i> food offerings	<i>sapindakaran</i> a ritual; the deceased is transformed into a named ancestor
			b) chief mourner	Kamāchāry a/ Brāhman	the ancestor	<i>pādukā dāna</i> (wooden sandals, etc.)	to be used in the next world
			c) chief mourner	Brāhman	the ancestor	<i>sayyā dāna</i> ; gift of cow; <i>sidā dāna</i> (uncooked food)	to be used in the next world; the Brāhman is identified with the ancestor (he wears a set of clothes of the deceased)
20	monthly/ annual	a) ghat or home	chief mourner	the ancestor	the ancestor	<i>pinda</i> , water, cooked food	food given to the Kusle the next day
		b) ghat or home	chief mourner	Brāhman/ Kar- macharya	the ancestor	several types of <i>dānas</i>	
21	First anni- versary	ghat	affines (WG/ WR)	chief mourner and brothers	chief mourner and brothers	set of new clothes (not white)	end of mourning

Notes

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University of Delhi, the University Grants Commission, India, and the Spalding Foundation Trust, UK for various grants to support my study.

1. As Stevenson (1971: 136) observes for another Hindu community: "Through all his rites and rejoicing a Hindu has been preparing for death, for,... the thread that strings all the ceremonies together is the imperative desire that the funeral offerings should be perfectly performed." Das has also argued that 'Hindu scriptures enjoins upon the individual the duty of preparation for death and the preservation of the purity of body and spirit'. (1977:121).
2. See Nepali (1965) and Pradhan (1986) for description of earlier life cycle rituals among Hindu Newars of Kathmandu.
3. This is probably why in some communities unmarried men are first symbolically married to a milkweed plant before they are cremated (cf. Carter 1983:130). Newar women who have undergone the *ihi* ('mock-marriage') ceremony are accorded the same status as the males who have undergone their puberty or initiation (*kaitā puja*) ceremony.
4. Two rituals are performed as part of the annual cycle to prolong life beyond the allotted time. The first is Kija puja (brother worship) when the sister pleads with Yamarāja to prolong her brother's life. The second is Mha puja (self or body worship) when the mother pleads with Yamaraja to prolong her husband's and children's lives beyond their allotted time.
5. The expression '*kā wala*' is often used to refer to the bride's husband or his relative coming to collect her to take her back to his house. Both the bride and the deceased go to another home to the husband's house, in one case, and to Yamaloka, in the other.
6. The Hindu ideal is that a person should not die at home but at the ghats of a sacred river (Das 1977; Kaushik 1976; Parry 1981, 1982; Nepali 1965). However there are some indications that the ideal is not so much to die outside the house as to die where one's body is pure at the moment of death. The Newars recreate the river site at home: the place where the dying man is kept is called Brahma-nala and the pouring of the holy water (*jal*) at the feet of the dying person (see later) is equated with immersing the person in the river. Though my informants have not explicitly made such connections, another anthropologist, Nepali (1965:127) has done so. According to Pandey (1976:247-248) a similar practice of immersing the lower half of the dying person is performed in Bengal, but it is a modern development. He states that the normal practice was to die at home near the place where the sacrificial fires are kept.
7. At present very few *vaidyas* attend to dying persons. I have met only one who claimed to have been present at many deaths. He said that he had to purify himself whenever he was present at death. (See Nepali 1965:127 for the role of *vaidyas* at death). At Pasupati (Ārya ghāt) there are some *vaidyas*, called *ghate vaidya* (from *ghat*: cremation ground) who look after the dying but as far as I know, they are not Newars (cf. also Durkin-Longley 1982:159).

8. Kaushik (1976) and Das (1977), for example, write that the *preta* leaves the body when the skull of the half burnt body is cracked. Parry (1981, 1982), on the other hand, writes that it is the vital breath which leaves the body either then or at the moment of death. Moreover, the textual tradition and the popular belief do not agree on this issue.
9. Parry (1982:Fn.11,102) writes that for the majority of his informants *pran* ('vital breath') is synonymous with the *atma* ('soul'). More learned informants differentiate *pran* and *atma*. The rite of *kapal kriya* (breaking of the skull rite) during cremation marks the separation of the soul from the body.
10. Another reason could be that by lighting the pyre, the chief mourner has already offered the body to the gods as sacrifice.
11. I do not know of any such cases which happened within people's memory but the belief is very strong. Regmi (1965:711) cites the case of a documented evidence of a Newar king of Kathmandu, Bhupendramalla, who died in India. When the news reached Kathmandu, his horoscope was burnt and his wives committed sati in the same funeral pyre. According to a popular story, a famous tantric, Jamuna Gubhaju, one day returned home from Tibet only to discover that his son, believing him to be dead, had performed the mortuary rituals. He disappeared in disgust. Greenwold (1978:500) quotes his informant who told him that in such cases the person would be accepted back into society after undergoing the lifecycle rites, and thus being 'reborn'.
12. According to Bloch and Parry (1982) in 'tribal' societies, women handle the dead body and in the Indian (Hindu) context, caste specialist replace women in handling the body. Das (1986) writes that among the Punjabis, women replace castes specialists in handling the dead body.
13. See Das (1986) for an analysis of the functions of men and women, close and distant mourners in the work of mourning and mortuary rituals.
14. See Gutschow and Kolver (1975) on the funeral routes for another town, Bhaktapur. The funeral routes separate one locality from another.
15. See Chapter 9 of my thesis (Pradhan 1986) on the Thaku Jujus who are the chief patrons of the gods/goddess of the cremation grounds.
16. Regarding the parallels between cremation and sacrifice, Das writes, "If we recall the basic elements in the scheme of a sacrifice, outlined by Hubert and Mauss (1964), we find striking similarities with the cremation rituals. Thus the site of cremation is prepared in exactly the same manner as in fire sacrifice, i.e., the prescriptive use of ritually pure wood, the purification of the site, its consecration with holy water, and the establishment of Agni with the use of proper *mantras*... The dead body is prepared in the same manner as the victim of a sacrifice and is attributed with divinity...The successful completion of death rituals ensures that the spirit of the dead man merges with the cosmic forces "(Das 1977:122-123)
17. In animal sacrifice, the sacrificial victim is offered water and food by the sacrificer. Before it is immolated, the victim has to signal its consent by

shaking its body once. Unless it does so, the victim may not be sacrificed. Similarly, as Das (1977:123) points out, only a person whose intention to sacrifice himself through death is established, is allowed to be cremated.

18. If the fire which is brought from the house of the dead person dies out, it has to be re-lit from the fire of one of the three permanent sacrificial fires (Agni Matha) in Sankhu, Pacali or Patan.
19. For more detailed description of the effigy making rite, see Nepali (1965:133).
20. I have heard that formerly the funeral priest cooked the rice and even made the *pindas* but I have not been able to verify this. In Kathmandu, the Bhās (funeral priests) no longer provide their traditional services.
21. For details of the various *pindas* offered during the whole year, which form three sets of sixteen *pinda* each, see Parry (1985). See also Nicholas's (1981) discussion of the *pinda* offerings. The term *pinda*, as Nicholas points out, means, "food for the departed body, a representation of the departed body, and... the body of the departed itself (Nicholas 1981:7-8). *Pinda* is also used in the sense of body or flesh as in the term *sapinda*, those who share a common bodily substance. *Srāddha* is derived from the term *śrāddha* (faith) and may be translated as offerings made to the ancestor with faith.
22. Some of these rituals are similar to the rituals performed in Banaras as described by Parry (1985:621).
23. For a discussion on the category *sapinda* and its three main aspects or functions, see Dumont 1983. For the *sapindikarana* rituals, see Inden and Nicholas (1977); Parry (1985:622); Stevenson (1920:185-6).
24. Actually mourners are polluted when they hear of the death of one of their relatives. If they hear of the death after the ten days are over, they are not polluted. Moreover if a *vṛddhi* or mangala (auspicious) *śrāddha* is performed before an auspicious ritual, they are not affected by pollution until the concluding day of the rituals. In practice, close mourners often observe pollution and mourning even if they have performed the *mangala śrāddha* (cf. Chapter 2, fn. 4 (Pradhan 1995)).
25. See Kaushik (1976) for an analysis of the roles of ritual specialists in the different phases of the state of the dead person; she presents a triadic structure.
26. I have for the moment ignored the roles of the Gwā (cremation specialists), the Josi (astrologers) and the Barber.
27. The ritual specialists receive separate free (*daksinā*) for their services. There is an important exception to this rule. When the king dies his brain is eaten by a Brāhman. He is seduced into eating the royal brain by being offered huge amounts of gifts and then he is exiled from the country.

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GENDER AND CASTE IN THE PERFECT BUDDHIST GIFT THE SAMYAK MAHADANA IN KATHMANDU, NEPAL

Bert van den Hoek

*"How are we to conduct ourselves, Lord,
with regard to womankind?"*

"Don't see them, Ānanda".

*"But if we should see them,
what are we to do?"*

"Abstain from speech Ānanda"

*"But if they should speak to us,
Lord, what are we to do?"*

"Keep wide awake Ānanda."

(conversation at the Buddha's deathbed, Mahāparinibbāna Sutta (MPNS) V 23, translated by T.W. Rhys Davids)

Introduction

The reluctance of the Buddha to admit women into his order is amply attested in the Buddhist canon. The reason often given for his initial rejection of the request thereto is that the itinerant way of life of the early *saṃgha* made a separation of men and women impossible. As Mrs Rhys Davids already has it, women's quarters became feasible only after the emergence of fixed settlements and expanded *viḥāras* (monasteries). Yet, after having become a widow, Sākyamuni's stepmother was finally admitted to the order together with her company during the Buddha's lifetime (Rhys Davids 1912/1934:175). The earliest Chinese version of the Buddha's life-story (translated from a lost Sanskrit source), dated by Zürcher around A.D. 200, indicates that there was more at stake than a simple avoidance of seduction, which would, anyway, have been mutual. In the Chinese rendering of the issue (the Zhong Benqi Jing, Ch. IX), the Buddha thrice rejected the request of his stepmother to join the order of monks, the *saṃgha*, with her female company. It is only through the interference of

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Ānanda, the Buddha's cousin and favourite attendant in the last phase of his life, that women are finally allowed to join the order, albeit under strict conditions.

The most hurting condition appears to be that, even if a woman has lived as a nun for one hundred years, she will still owe respect towards a man who has been just ordained, and should behave humbly and respectful in front of him. On this point Ananda again tries to intervene in favour of the nuns, but this time without success: "If I (Buddha) had not allowed women to lead the religious life, then the true doctrine of the Buddha would have blossomed for one thousand years." The Buddha continued: "But because women lead a religious life my doctrine will decline after five hundred years. Why?" The Buddha then enumerates five states of being which cannot be fulfilled by a woman. Among them is the state of Tathāgata, the most perfect and completely enlightened being which Śākyamuni himself embodies. After the Buddha has said so, the chapter ending phrase is: "everybody was filled with joy and acted accordingly (from Zürcher's Dutch translation, 1978: 176-182).

If we look at the Hindu-Buddhist society of the Kathmandu Valley, monasteries (Skt: *vihāra*, New, *bāhāl*) are nowadays inhabited by married "monks" and their offspring. Although the inhabitants of a *bāhāl* are still called a *sangha*, a community of monks, membership is based on hereditary rights and duties. Members include those who have moved outside the residential quarters of a *bāhāl* but who are still considered to belong to it. New residents in the *bāhāl* or outsiders can never become members of the *sangha*, nor can they receive the *dīkṣās* or consecrations that turns the true members into monks, and later, priests. To quote John Locke, who made an extensive study of Nepal's monasteries: "Each of the *bāhās* and *bahīs* is still inhabited and tended by a *sangha* of *śākya bhikṣus* and *vajrācāryas*, called Bare, who are nevertheless married men with families. They and their families constitute the *sangha* of the *vihāra*. Furthermore, under the influence of a growing ascendancy of standard Hinduism and the Hindu caste system, which all informants date to the time of Jayasthiti Malla, the Bare became in fact a caste" (Locke 1985: 3,4). It is this caste which is feasted every twelve years on the *Samyak mahāḍāna*, a common ceremonial meal in the open air.

Feasting monks, *bhikṣus*, has since the time of the Buddha been a source of merit for the laity, enhancing as it does the giver's virtue. Although, till the end of his life, the Buddha still went out with his begging bowl for alms (e.g., MPNS III 1), it had become usage that he and his close disciples were invited for their meal by kings, but also by a courtesan, and finally by a smith, Cunda (MPNS IV 13-21). The latter meal, which contained pork,

brought about the Buddha's, death. While the Buddha has the foresight that the meat was tainted, the last episode of his life also illustrates that the *sangha* in principle accepted any kind of food given by anybody.

The Buddha, who had already decided to die when he was feasted by the smith Cunda, does not allow his disciples to eat the tainted meat, and later says in verbose phrases that no one should stir up remorse in the smith Cunda, for: "These two offerings of food are of equal fruit and profit, and of much greater fruit and much greater profit than any other and which are the two? The offering of food which, when a Tathāgata has eaten, he attains the supreme and perfect insight; and the offering of food, which, when a Tathāgata has eaten, he passes anyway by that utter passing away in which nothing whatever remains behind (MPNS IV57, transl. T.W. Rhys Davids, 1900:84).

The points of contrast between the ancient Buddhist gift and the Samyak Mahādāna—"the perfect great gift"—are salient. It is not only that monks who are no longer monks are invited from monasteries that are no longer monasteries. Among the indigenous population of the valley, the Newars, one does not find true monks any more, apart from a few entries into Tibetan monasteries and into the Theravāda school—which was revived in Nepal during this century. The vajrācāryas and śākyabhikṣus are then the living legacy of Nepal's monastic past. The turning point has not yet been historically established; the only certainty is that monastic life had come to an end in the late Malla times (Locke 1985:3), that is before Prithvi Navayan Shah's conquest of the Kathmandu Valley in 1768. The greater part of the still extant monasteries has thus been built or rebuilt as residential quarters for householders, albeit always with a Buddha or Bodhisattva shrine at the core, just opposite the entrance of the *bāhāl*'s courtyard, and a secret shrine for initiates on the second floor of the compound. Furthermore, the initiated members of a *bāhāl* can like brahmins act as priests for other householders, who are not necessarily Buddhist.

The dichotomy between Buddhism and Hinduism is not at all clear with regard to the population of Kathmandu Valley. The Jyāpu or Farmers, the most numerous caste in the Valley, mostly employ *vajrācāryas* as their household priest (*purohita*), but this does not mean that they contrast themselves as Buddhists with Hindus. Likewise people employing Brahmin *purohitas*, such as the second largest caste of Shresthas, do not consider themselves as Hindus in opposition to Buddhists.

The mixture, rather than being the result of syncretism, reflects an ancient configuration in which Buddhism was the refuge it was meant to be, but not a religion completely separate from Hinduism. A number of high castes of artisans and merchants yet make the distinction and profess to be Buddhists.

They are together called Urāy, a composite caste within which intermarriage is allowed.

The Urāy are the main actors in serving the Samyak Mahādāna to the monks, the gods and the king alike. Although various Urāy subcastes serve different items of food (Shrestha 1993), the Tulādhar, the Merchants, are the ones designated to prepare cooked rice and serve it to the Bare. Accepting cooked rice from other castes is a most precarious thing in Newar caste society. In the twenties of this century it even led to a split among the *vajrācārya* officiants, the priests who carry the title *gubhāju*. The rift has been excellently described by Collin Rosser (1966, 1979); it centred on the issue of the gubhājus accepting cooked rice from their Urāy patrons.

In a meeting in 1926 it was decided no longer to do so, because"conditions have now changed. To maintain the Gubhāju's prestige and authority over society, we should not take food from Urāys. Those who violate this rule will be expelled from the caste". Accordingly a number of dissident gubhājus were expelled, but their leader took the case to court. "From time immemorial we Gubhājus have been taking cooked rice from our Urāy *jajmāns* (patrons). In the Samek (=samyak) ceremony it is the Urāy who cook the rice and distribute it among the gubhājus and Bares present" (Rosser 1979:107-109). Here, in the petition to the court ("to punish those who expelled me") the Samyak Mahādāna was thus brought up as an argument in case. The rift lingered on for a long time and of course stirred up bad feelings among the Urāy patrons too—who felt degraded by the gubhājus' refusal to accept cooked rice from them.

The Tulādhar continue to serve cooked rice in the twelve-yearly *samyak* ceremony. Samyak Mahādāna can be organised in between by private persons, who acquire great merit in arranging the costly affair. The so-called optional samyak has not been performed since 1950. If the organizer is not a Bare or Urāy, boiled rice cannot be served on the occasion. Suvarna Man Tulādhar (1993) mentions two examples: Samyak Mahādāna performed by a member of the Oilpresser's caste (Mānandhar) in which the boiled rice was replaced by parched rice, and a samyak organized by a Ranjitkār (Dyers' caste) in which only *gulmari*, a confectionary item made from rice flour, was offered in place of boiled rice.

The rise and development of the Samyak Mahādāna is as untraceable as the of monasticism. No animal sacrifices take place, no blood is being shed at all, and the meal itself is vegetarian. Some informants like to place the origin of the Samyak Mahādāna in the time of the Buddha himself, or at least to track it to the time of Emperor Aśoka. Tantric aspects are minimal when compared with the elaborate rituals and sacrifices which the gubhāju mostly perform on behalf of their patrons. Samyak may well be older than

historically traceable regulated albeit not in its present, form. At present, the king presides over the Samyak Mahādāna more like a guest than as the host that he would have been in ancient times. The invitations are sent out (to gods and humans alike) by the greater *sangha* and are the special responsibility of the śākyabhikṣus themselves. In sending the invitations as well as in cooking the radish curry to be served in the mahādāna, they play the double role of givers and receivers.

Although the development of the Samyak Mahādāna from a pristine form is not traceable, there is, according to Suvarna Man Tulādhār, evidence that "the ceremony of Samyak was first started in the 15th century by Golchandra of Itumbahāl. The 'Samyak Celebrations Trust' was gradually established over time and plots of land were placed under its trusteeship to ensure sustainability in the celebration of Samyak once every three years." As such it seems to have fallen into decay at the time of King Prithvi Narayan Shah's conquest of the Valley: "Historical records illuminate that King Prithvi Narayan Shah the Great ensured the celebrations of Samyak on a regular and continuing basis once in twelve years by institutionally consolidating and streamlining the organisation management and resources of the "Samyak Celebrations Trust" (Tuladhār 1993).

Today the Palace is contributing Rs 200,000 (f 8,000,-) to sustain the Samyak performance, "hardly enough to buy the wood for the cooking fires," according to some informants. Income from land resources has dwindled since the land reforms thirty years ago: many tenants no longer hand over part of their produce to the trust. It has thus become hard again to sustain the Samyak Mahādāna, and rumours have it that the 1993 celebration could very well have been the last of its kind.

More mysterious is the origin of Misā Samyak, the *samyak* of women on the day following the great *samyak*, and little has been written about it. That lack of attention, even for the separation of the women as such, may well be related to the position of women in the *sangha* from ancient times. No king or other dignitaries come to grace this occasion, and the statue of the main Buddha ("Svayambhu Dyo," considered to be the Buddha Amitābha) has just returned to his "godhouse" (New: *dyochem*) when the women's *samyak* is about to start. However, at the moment that Svayambhu Dyo has been carried back to his abode on Svayambhu Hill, a brass statue of the powerful goddess Hārītī Ajimā is brought down to grace the women's *samyak*, in the company of a few select Dipankara Buddhas who welcome the goddess at the foot of Svayambhu Hill—at the site where they had bidden farewell to Svayambhu Dyo just before. Among all divinities and Buddhas who were carried to the field of the Samyak Mahādāna the day before, Hārītī was the great absentee.

Unlike the other goddesses whose shrines surround Kathmandu, Hārītī Ajimā has no yearly procession. The brass procession statue is only brought down for the occasion of Misā Samyak: In the *samyak* of women Hārītī seems to occupy a position comparable to that of the king the day before. Hārītī Ajimā once was, according to legend, a demon queen who was converted by the Buddha himself. Misā Samyak is thus presided over by one of the most fearsome goddesses of the Valley, who appears to change place with the peaceful image of the Buddha Amitābha.

Surprisingly, the women are not only given the same food, the remainder as it were, which the men have eaten the day before, but are also served by the same Urāy castes who served the king, the divinities and the men on the previous day. This bifurcation will be further investigated in this paper, as well as the tail-end of the Samyak Mahādāna, Daru Samyak, which is celebrated one year later and which, at a smaller scale, brings together elements which were so strictly separated the year before. Most notably, in Daru Samyak men and women come together, and Hārītī Ajimā and Svayambhu Dyo likewise.

The Samyak Mahādāna

The prelude to the Samyak Mahādāna starts one year before the performance proper. The ritual of gway dām tayegu, which is carried out in front of Amitābha on the hill of Svayambhu, serves to announce the Samyak Mahādāna one year later—according to the solar calendar. The ritual, which has been described by Sumon Kamal Tuladhar (1978/80:47-70) is also the first invitation for the king and the divinities to attend the *samyak*. *Kisali*, consisting of gway (areca nut), dām (a coin) and husked rice, is brought to the main divinities around the stupa of Svayambhu, to the palace, and to the most important bāhāls. There are, at least since the time of King Prithvi Narayan Shah, three bāhāls which carry the ultimate responsibility for the organisation (the *guthi* or trust) and for the performance of the Samyak Mahādāna: Itum and Vatu Bāhāl in the northern part of the inner city of Kathmandu, and Lagan Bāhāl in the southern part. The latter bāhāl supplies the Pramukh Mahāsthavir, in common parlance the eldest (*thakāli*) of the Samyak Trust, who is the leader of the organisation.

The invitation ritual will be repeated next year eight days before the actual ceremony, which is always performed on Māgh Samkrāntion the 14th or 15th of January. Formerly all bāhāls of the Valley received a writ invitation as well, which in 1992 was replaced by an announcement in the country's government newspaper, the Gorkhāpatra, as well as in a broadcast by Radio Nepal. This method gave rise to confusion at the entrance to the field because the vajācārya, śākyahhikṣus and other invitees could not (apart

from the VIPs and the organisers) be properly identified as such. The open field, Bhuikhel, which had already shrank during the last decade, must give place to all divinities and priests or lay monks as well as to the temporary stage with the king's throne and the VIP tribune. Space would appear insufficient to accommodate all rightful recipients of the mahādāna.

Locke (1985) draws a comparison between the Samyak ceremony and the yearly *pañcadāna* (New: *pañjārām*) which is annually given by common people to visiting lay monks and priests on a day in the summer month of Guṃlā: "On the appointed day the Buddhist lay people prepare a sort of altar at their home adorned with any Buddhist images they have upon it. In front of the altar they place baskets with four kinds of grain and salt. Throughout the day any of the Bare (Śākyas and Vajrācāryas) of the city come and collect their share of offerings (...). The whole custom is intimately connected with Dipankara, and in each of the three cities the main image put out on this day is that of Dipankara (who is) one of the earlier Buddhas who came before Śākyamuni and is supposed to have predicted his coming. He attained a great popularity in Malla Nepal and there are images of him at almost every bāhā or bahī. The images are donated by individuals who have the image consecrated and then usually install it in one of the vihāras. All of these images are brought out in procession at the time of the samyak ceremony which is held every five years at Kvā Bahā in Pāṭan and every twelve years at Bhuikhel below Svayambhu in Kathmandu. The ceremony is a sort of general *pañcadāna* to which are invited the sanghas of all the bāhās and bahīs in the area" (Locke 1985:11, 12).

A few remarks have to be made with regard to the connection between the yearly *pañcadāna* and the twelve-yearly mahādāna in Kathmandu. The Dipankaras may well have gained popularity during Malla times (from the fourteenth to the eighteenth century) in Nepal, but Dipankara is also a very old image in the legend of the Buddha, whose life-story, 91 eras ago, appears to be reflection of the life of Śākyamuni himself: A crownprince leaves his home to become a Buddha. The first part of the sūtra on "the origin of divine life," the Xiuxing-benqi jing, starts with "the famous episode in which, 91 cosmic eras ago, the then living Buddha Dipankara revealed to a young Brahmin student that he would once become the Buddha Śākyamuni..." (from Zürcher 1978:16, 44-51).

Regarding the appearance of the former Buddha Dipankara, a similarity may be observed between the yearly *Pañcadāna* and the Samyak. However, while Dipankara may have gained popularity in the time of the Malla kings, his general representation as the revealer of the future Buddha goes back to at least more than a millennium before Malla rule in Nepal. The similarity in this respect between *Pañcadāna* and Samyak may rather point to a

common source than to a straight connection. And, if any such connection is sought for, it exists in the obligation of any private performer of the Samyak Mahādāna to have an image made of the Dipankara Buddha. For, as Suvārṇa Man Tulādhara has it, "one of the ideas behind Mahāyāna Buddhist ritual is the identification of the worshipper with the deity." Some of those individual Dipankaras remain in private hands, but should nevertheless participate in the Samyak ceremony. This can give rise to considerable effort, for in Samyak the Dipankaras have to move about the city. Being more than twice a man's height, these hollow wooden structures (with a shiny metal face in case they are "yellow-faced") have to be carried by someone creeping inside the statue and carrying it—looking through openings in the belly of the statue, and supported by attendants.

The most significant contrast between the Pañcadāna and the Samyak Mahādāna is that the former is a matter of individual families and the latter an organized affair of the whole *sangha*. Pañcadāna is also given by families who do not necessarily profess Buddhism, and accepted by the "monks"—the vajrācāryas and the śākya—bhikṣus—from such households as they choose to visit on their round. The food does not contain cooked rice, but it may have more ingredients than indicated by the word "pañca", five (see, e.g., Lewis 1993:337). Pañcadāna and Samyak Mahādāna share the virtue of alms-giving, but in the twelve-yearly Samyak the tasks to be carried out are rigorously divided by caste and location. The two main items of the meal, the radish curry and the rice, are prepared by respectively the Sākya bhikṣus of Itum Bāhāl and the Tulādhara (Merchants) of Neta quarter, and cooked on the spot, separate from the household sphere.

Ten days before the Samyak Mahādāna, the Sākya start cooking their radish curry, after they have dug out the radish ceremonially. The cooking session, which will last for six days, starts with the consecration of a sacred hearth, the *dyo bhutu* (god's hearth) which will not be used in the actual cooking. After six days of cooking in large brass vessels on five hearths, the radish curry is stored in a tent erected for this purpose. After consecrating their own unused sacred hearth, the Tulādhara take over the five cooking hearths to boil the rice for four subsequent days. The product must be a little more than half-cooked, such in order to hold the rice durable for the coming days. The half-cooked rice is spread out to dry in one tent, and then taken for storage to another tent. Other Urāy such as Kansahār (Copperworkers) prepare several varieties of lentils (Nep: *dāl*, New: *kem*). Likewise sweets are made by the Madhikarmi subcaste of Urāy. Those items are brought to the field of Bhuikhel the day before the Samyak. The cooking hearths on the field, by the way, are made of unburnt bricks by Jyāpu (farmers) and painted with lion figures by Citrakār (painters). And so the

division of labour goes on up to the leafplates on which the meal is to be served; those should be made and presented on the occasion by the Tulādhār of Asan quarter.

On the eve of Samyak Mahādāna Buddhas, Dipankaras and other divinities from all over the Valley are carried to the square in front of the ancient (Malla) royal palace in the centre of Kathmandu. In 1992, 89 divinities paraded into the square and were placed against the walls of the old royal palace. In 1979 (the actual interval was thirteen years), 117 divinities participated (Darasha Nevāmi 1992:35-40). Reasons for the decline are theft and the insufficiency of the invitation by radio and newspapers. The great get-together of the divinities and the site of the royal palace evokes the idea of a royal reception, which it may once have been. Indications are that it once was a reception of the whole *sangha* of Kathmandu Valley by the king, like it has been recorded several times in the legend of the Buddha Śākyamuni's life.

The main god of Svayambhu, the procession image of Amitābha, gets a special reception (New: *Isakusa*) at the old city's frontiers. Accompanied by music of different kinds, Svayambhu Dyo descends in the company of a caitya as well as the sage Manyuśrī (in the form of silver footprints) and is joined by a statue of the goddess Khadga Yoginī from the Bijesvarī temple adjacent to the stairs descending from Svayambhu hill. At the frontier and former gate of the city those divinities are welcomed by the Dipankara Buddhas of the three main *bāhāls*, preceded by a red Tārā and three boys representing the *triratna* (the three jewels) of Buddhism, the Buddha, the Dharma (doctrine) and the Sangha (community). The *triratna* boys are also chosen from the three *bāhāls* charged with the organisation of the Samyak Mahādāna.

The company then makes a tour through the northern part of the city, touching the central square of Asan quarter and passing Janabāhāl, from where the statue of the most popular god Seto Matsyendranāth (a form of Avalokīteśvara) joins the party. At Hanumān Dhokā Svayambhu Dyo and his company occupy the first places in the row of Buddhas, Dipankaras and other divinities placed along the palace walls. They also be the first ones in the procession of all divinities on the way from the old palace to the field of Bhuikhel next day. If all goes well, the divinities—some of whom are carried by motor-driven carts—will arrive at Bhuikhel before the king of Nepal arrives, a sign that the ceremony must start. Due to delays, a number of Dipankaras arrived late and had to wait outside the sacred enclosure until the royal ceremonies had finished, a procedure which evoked criticism. Another aspect of the 1992 performance did the same: both Svayambhu Dyo and the king of Nepal receive a ritual welcome when entering the sacred

field, but Svayambu Dyo should be served the Samyak Mahādāna. In 1992 the sequence was reversed, with the king receiving the first honours, perhaps due to a lack of coordination in the overcrowded field.

The ruling Shah dynasty of Nepal is explicitly Hindu, a fact which may perhaps explain that the present king, Birendra Bir Bikram Shah Deva, was received more as a divine guest than as a pious host of the ceremony. All different castes participating in preparing the foods made their appearance for the king, who touched the items of food such presented. A great plate (New: *Thāybhū*) containing the rice, the eight kinds of lentils, the radish curry as well as milk, sugar juice and sweets was subsequently presented to and touched by him, before Svayambhu Dyo himself received this mahādāna.

All attention was thus focussed on the king, whose feet were subsequently washed in a brass bowl by the mian Śākya Thakāli, the Pramukh Mahāsthaviza, followed by his wife and the two other Thakālis of Vatu and Itum Bahāl. Only after that the Buddha Amitābha, the main guest, was served with the same foods as the king, placed in front of the statue. The king then dutifully paid homage to Svayambhu Dyo and his company, passing the various other divinities, and hence went his own way.

The Vajrācāryas and Śāyabhiṣṭas had a hard time in obtaining their mahādāna amidst the crowd which circumambulated the field after the king did so. But most of the food is collected by the Bare guests and taken home and abroad (formerly even to Tibet) in its quality of blessed food.

Afterwards the guests and divinities disperse very quickly, apart from Svayambhu Dyo who makes a second round through the northern city. Surprisingly the goldpainted statue spends the night in a Shrestha caste home which does not have a Buddhist persuasion. The over-night stay has always been on this spot in northern Kathmandu, is the reason given for the location.

The contents and meaning of the Samyak Mahādāna itself have been elaborately dealt with by Hemrāj Śākya (1980) and will not be treated in detail in the present context. Instead attention will be turned towards the day following Samyak which involves Misā Samyak (the Samyak of Women), graced by the goddess Hārītī Ajimā.

Misā Samyak

Apart from the divine Tārā and the goddess Bijesvarī who follow Svayambhu Dyo from the sacred hill, the Samyak Mahādāna is a completely male affair. Misā Samyak, however, is not a completely female affair. The same team of people who served the food to the male recipients is, or should be, serving the food to their female counterparts the day after.

Women, who can be seen as almost having a monopoly in cooking and serving food indoors, take no part whatsoever in serving the food of the mahādāna outside the house. The contrast between the male Samyak Mahādāna and the female Samyak is nevertheless striking. The king, the throne, the VIP tribune and all dignitaries (ministers, mayors, diplomats and even researchers) who showed up the previous day, were remarkable by their absence at Misā Samyak. All Buddha figures, caityas and Dipankaras have likewise returned home, except for the ones of the three organizing bāhāls.

The presence of the divinities of Itum, Vatu and Lagan Bāhāl serves a double purpose. On the one hand they pay a farewell homage to the main deity of the previous day, Svayambhu Dyo, who is returning to his hilltop god-house. On the other hand they give a ceremonial welcome to the goddess Hāritī Ajimā, who is descending to attend the Misā Samyak. Both movements are equally astonishing. The main Samyak deity is ostentably leaving before the Misā Samyak starts and the fearsome goddess Hāritī, not invited at the male Samyak Mahādāna, is making her rare appearance at Misā Samyak only. If there is any idea of compensation (which is not outspoken) in the exchange of divinities, no such compensation is provided for the role of the king of Nepal. The throne is still standing at the place where it was facing the gathering of the previous day, but it will remain empty. The absence of the king is not made up for by the presence of the queen, and the remaining divinities plus Hāritī Ajimā will take up their positions on the opposite side of the holy field.

After spending the night in the non-Buddhist Shrestha house, Svayambhu Dyo can be worshipped there by individual devotees during the greater part of the following day. Most of the devotees make each other's pictures sitting side by side with the divinity. In the afternoon Svayambhu Dyo receives worship (*pūjā*: rice, red powder, incense and other ingredients) from the main Śākya thakāli and his wife. On the road outside the courtyard the same Dipankaras are lined up (including Tārā and the triratna boys) who welcomed Svayambhu Dyo into the city. They follow the latter up to the foot of Svayambhu Hill. There the Dipankaras circle around the departing Amitābha three times, bowing in front of him (except the huge Dipankara from Lagan quarter, who is not moved by a human being inside the statue but drawn on wheels). Svayambhu Dyo also receives a last portion of the foodstuffs prepared by the different castes, and, once uphill, gets a welcoming ceremony in front of his god-house under great public interest. The ceremony is carried out by the wife of the thakāli of the Buddhācārya, the special group of Buddhist priests who take care of the divinities on Svayambhu Hill.

The same group of priests takes out the brass statue of Hārītī Ajimā immediately after the safe return of Svayambhu Dyo. In contrast to the photo-sessions which surrounded Svayambhu Dyo, no pictures of Hārītī Ajimā are allowed to be taken by anybody. Hārītī was first brought to her temple and put in front of her permanent stone representation. The Śākya thakāli from Lagan then made an elaborate *pūjā* of the goddess behind closed doors. Suddenly secrecy prevails. Who is Hārītī Ajimā? Her background is part and parcel of the oral tradition of the Buddhācāya priests.

Hārītī once was the eldest wife of a demon (Yakṣa or Dānava) king, who married five hundred wives in order to get children. When he did not succeed he consulted an astrologer who gave him one big papaya fruit to divide among his 500 wives in order to make them pregnant. The king had to hide the papaya fruit for several days in a secret room to get it ripe. Because his eldest wife Hārītī held all the keys of the palace, he had to take a key from her to store his secret treasure. The missing key, predictably enough, made Hārītī curious, and she took it from her husband while he was asleep. Entering the secret room she saw nothing but the papaya, which she tasted. It was so delicious that she ate the whole of it. When the king discovered the disappearance of the papaya next day, Hārītī confessed to have eaten it. The king was furious and, in spite of the fact that Hārītī bore 505 children, he banished her from the palace.

Hārītī and her children thereafter wandered around hungry, and when no food could be found anymore, Hārītī started to steal other children in order to feed them to her own. She became an ogress terrifying the world. The story now takes a turn into the direction of a jataka legend (see also Hemrāj Śākya 1978). In her wanderings Hārītī came to Svayambhu Hill in Kathmandu at the same time that the Buddha Śākyamuni was preaching there. Knowing her identity, the Buddha took away her dearest child, for which, predictably again, Hārītī went to search everywhere. Finally she dared to approach the Buddha with the question of her missing child. "Look", the Buddha said, "she is playing over there", pointing to the courtyard of his monastery. Hārītī was overjoyed, and when Buddha pointed out to her how much grief the loss of only one of her 505 children had given her, she realized her terrible mistake: from an ogress she became a protectress of children.

The story accounts for the fact that the demon queen Hārītī became a devotee of the Buddha and a protectress of children, but it does not clarify some other aspects of her character—which cannot elaborately be dwelt upon here either. Hārītī Ajimā is, or at least was until recently, the goddess of smallpox, whose anger could bring about the disease and whose grace could make it vanish. And, although having no yearly *yātrā* (procession) of her own like the other fearsome goddesses surrounding Kathmandu, she can

be seen incarnated into numerous *dyo maiju*, indigenous healers who treat the patients while being possessed by Hāritī. The *dyo maiju* are mostly female and nearly always act in the capacity of the goddess Hāritī. Another category of healers, the mostly male and high-caste *vaidyas*, often confess to be inspired by Hāritī without sharing the necessity of being possessed by the goddess in the course of their treatment of patients (see also Gellner 1992). The popularity of Hāritī in those circles is often ascribed to her Hindu-Buddhist identity: as a Buddhist convert she is the protectress of children especially; and as the Hindu goddess of smallpox Sitalā she may avert this and other terrible diseases. This current opinion does not appear to be sufficient however, because it does not take account of the original demonic character of the goddess and her affinity with witches. Most often the treatment of both *dyo maijus* and *vaidyas* consists of tracing the cause of a disease to a witch or somebody having the evil eye. The embodiment of Hāritī by different media can be seen as a kind of universal *yātrā*, an aspect of the goddess which will be returned to in the conclusion of this paper.

It is thus not the queen of Nepal but the ancient demon queen who comes to grace the Samyak of Women, as if to indicate the poison in the gift. Not that such a notion is explicit: the Misā Samyak shows, perhaps by the absence of all glamour and publicity, a greater solemnity than the preceding Samyak Mahādāna. Some of the women participating—in this case not all of them are of an explicit Buddhist persuasion—have stayed fasting on the field for the whole day. Hāritī Ajimā is brought down straight and simple, without any detour, and she stays only as long as the Misā Samyak takes; in two hours she is going up again to her god-house. The customary welcome ceremony (*lasakusa*) is carried out both in coming (by the Śākya thakāli) and in returning (by the Buddhācāryas), but in time and in space the visit to the sacred field is kept as short as possible—in striking contrast to the manifestation of Svayambhu Dyo.

Ordinary people; both male and female; come to give alms of money, paddy and sweets to both the divinities and the assembled women, an act of devotion which went almost lost in the crowd during the preceding day. The foodstuffs of the mahādāna, some of them nine days old, are for the most part carried away again by the women to be divided as a holy reminder (*prasāda*) of the occasion or to be used as ingredients for equally holy alcoholic beverages.

After the foods are eaten or collected, Hāritī and the divinities of the three bāhāls go their own way, and the twelve-yearly Samyak may now be said to be truly finished.

Conclusion

The Samyak Mahādāna has a prelude in the gṃay dām tayegu ceremony, the invitation ritual one year before the great performance itself. It also has an aftermath exactly one year later, which seems a small-scale repetition of the great Samyak, but one in which several significant separations dissolve.

The most general divide in Samyak Mahādāna is that between men and women. It is a separation which may date back to the ambivalence with regard to women's participation in the erstwhile *sangha* of the Buddha himself. If so, the distinction is annihilated in the one-year-after ceremony, the Daru Samyak, in which men and women gather at one time in the sacred field of Bhuikhel, because, as the participants say, it is a small-scale affair compared to the Samyak Mahādāna.

The divide between men and women in the Samyak Mahādāna extends to the divine and the royal realms. Of the 89 divinities—two-thirds of them being Dipankaras—only six Dipankaras and a Tārā statue attend the Misā Samyak. A royal representative is absent there, unless royalty is seen as an aspect of the identity of Hārītī Ajimā herself, who once was a queen. Since ancient time kings embody a dual identity, with divinity being part of their human identity, or humanity being part of their divine identity (Van den Hoek 1990). The king, the queen and the royal goddess constitute a triangle of which the angular points are incompatible. The central royal goddess, Taleju Bhavāni as she is called in Kathmandu Valley, embodies the very power of the king, the *śakti* of the realm. Only the king can, if he wishes, be initiated into her cult; the human queen can not.

In the legends of Kathmandu the king of Nepal is engaged in an erotic play or a straightforward gamble with the royal goddess. It is a game which he tends to lose. Year after year, until the present day, the king's power has to be sanctioned by the royal goddess, who may wilfully desert him. Like Hārītī, the central goddess Taleju comes down from her high temple abode in the palace complex only once a year during Dasain—not to make a further tour of the city but just to receive sacrifice on behalf of the king and the army (Van den Hoek & Shrestha 1992). Voluntarily or not, the king is dependent on his divine female counterpart. Certainly the relationship between the goddess Hārītī Ajimā and the king is not as direct as the one between the king and the royal goddess Taleju, who is also the goddess of war, the royal duty par excellence. But Hārītī presides over the dangers of pestilence in the kingdom. Centuries ago a Malla king of Nepal is said to have smashed the stone statue of Hārītī after pestilence had visited his own family, but of course, to no avail.

At the divine level femininity is not inferior to masculinity. The difference between the Samyak Mahādāna and the Misā Samyak cannot be

formulated as a straight hierarchical one. It involves a distinction between the exoteric and the esoteric spheres of religious experience. From the exoteric point of view the absence of either the king or the queen at Misā Samyak, as well as the departure of the main divinity, Svayambhu Dyo, just before the women's ceremony starts, may seem almost offensive. From the esoteric point of view they make place for a different kind of power such as embodied by the goddess Hārītī Ajimā.

On the occasion of Daru Samyak, distinctions dissolve, but not completely. Svayambhu Dyo, Manyūrī and Hārītī descend collectively, but the statue of Svayambhu Dyo is not the same one as the gold-painted Amitābha who visited the Samyak Mahādāna. It is a recently made and smaller silver copy of the divinity, who, up to about a quarter century ago, was only represented at Daru Samyak by a begging bowl, a *piṇḍapātra*. The breach with the latter tradition and the joint appearance of Svayambhu Dyo and Hārītī Ajimā is thus a very recent concurrence, springing forth from the donation of a second statue of Svayambhu Dyo by the family of the eldest of the Buddhācārya group of priests. The two characters are in a way incompatible. Hārītī Ajimā can be said to control the very pestilence which the Buddha wants to liberate the world from. She is a recourse for women wanting progeny, a protectress of children and guardian of great illnesses which may ravage the human race in this world. Although no slaughter is allowed on Svayambhu Hill, Hārītī accepts duck eggs and animal sacrifices; the animals are set free after being consecrated. Her cult is esoteric and her coming down is preceded by a secret worship. Among the ingredients of worship is a plate of *samay baji*, a tantric mixture of beaten rice, roast buffalo meat, black soyabeans, ginger and alcohol; which represents the ultimate sacrifice for the initiated ones (Juju and Shrestha 1985:13).

The other-worldly Svayambhu Dyo ostensibly takes his leave just before the women's ceremony starts, but at a more concealed level he makes place for the other, this-worldly power of the goddess Hārītī Ajimā. In the legend of the Buddha as related in the Mahāparinibbāna sutta, the enlightened one tells his disciple Ānanda: "The Tathāgata has no such thing as the closed fist of a teacher, who keeps some things back" (MPNS II 32, transl. Rhys Davids 1900). The other-worldly Buddha has no secrets to hide, but the this-worldly goddess Hārītī certainly has, in the most literal sense. When she descends to Bhuikhel during Misā Samyak and Daru Samyak, the taking of pictures is forbidden and a scarf is put over her face as a security measure.

In Daru Samyak, it seems, everything comes back to normal. Husbands and wives of the Bare caste eat separately, but share the same field. Although the Neta Tulādhār still serve the rice on the occasion, they have their own feast, including meat and alcohol, after their function has been

completed. In contrast with the Samyak Mahādāna, the Daru Samyak appears to be an elaborate family feast of the Bare, and especially of those bāhāls which organized the Samyak Mahādāna. It is in that respect more true to life than the great Samyak itself, and naturally so. The Daru Samyak has no self-existing purpose. What it expresses is the link between ordinary life and the next Samyak Mahādāna eleven years from then. It indicates the unending chain of events which links the one Samyak Mahādāna to the other, just as the chain of lives with its intervals is part of the unending *samsāra*—the circle of rebirths.

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AMBIVALENCE DENIED: THE MAKING OF *RASTRIYA ITIHAS* IN PANCHAYAT ERA TEXTBOOKS

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Looking back to our history lessons in schools in Nepal, I cannot budge the feeling that our nationalistic pride and biased high opinion regarding Nepal (and its sovereign past and all) were so deeply implanted in us that even before our mind gets enough time to evaluate issues concerning Nepal's pride, our so called 'pride for being Nepali' gets in the way.

- A Nepali high school graduate from the class of 1991

Introduction

As eleven Nepalis (including myself), all in their twenties or early thirties, climbed one of the hills on the northwestern outskirts of Kathmandu one fine sunny day in October 1994, I asked them what lesson of Nepali history they remembered the most from their days in school.¹ Excluding one person who had grown up outside of Nepal and had thus missed out being socialized into the textbooks' version of national culture, all the rest unanimously remembered the account of Balbhadra's bravery in Nalapani during the Anglo-Nepal war (1814-16) as the history lesson par excellence from their school days. I had anticipated this answer. As we stopped for a brief rest, we proceeded to collectively remember aloud the details of what we as school students had read about Balbhadra some ten to twenty years ago.

Sometime in the 1960s, the Nepali language primers for all school grades were renamed *Mahendramala* after the then reigning King Mahendra (r. 1955-1972). The *Mahendramala* that was used in grade four before the New Education System Plan (NESP) was implemented in 1971 contains a chapter on Balbhadra as a drama (Khanal et al. 2028 v.s.:105-10). The NESP, which was executed in various phases over a number of years, was

implemented in the district of Lalitpur, where my school was located, in 1974. As in the other districts in which the NESP was introduced that year, students of grade four were required to read the new set of nationally standardized textbooks.² I had reached grade four in 1974 but since I have not been able to locate the textbooks I used that year, I can not say if I heard about Balbhadra that year. The following year, I read about him more than once. The *Mahendramala* I read in grade five contains not one but two separate chapters on Balbhadra: first a poem simply entitled "Nala-Pani" and a few pages later, an essay called "Bir Balbhadra" (Adhikari et al. 2031 v.s.:93-5, 108-111). The subject of multiple chapters and genres, Balbhadra, or more correctly, his name as an icon of Nepali nationhood, remained indelibly with me. On that October morning I confirmed that it had been no different for some other Nepalis of my generation and class, socialized in the schools in the 1970s and the 1980s. In this essay I discuss the process that shaped our collective memory and highlight its significance for studies of national culture in present-day Nepal.

Recently many observers have noted that during the reign of the Panchayat system (1962-1990), the Nepali language, Hinduism and monarchy constituted the triumvirate of official Nepali national culture (Burghart 1994, Shah 1993, P. Sharma 1992).³ This characterization leaves out one other important theme - that of Nepali national history written in a very particular template - from the corpus of Panchayat-sponsored Nepali nation culture. The ground work for the making of this national historical narrative that would become central to the Panchayat era state-produced Nepali nationalism in Nepal was laid during the first half of this century in British India by a small group of variously expatriated Nepalis. As I have shown elsewhere, while the Rana rulers of Nepal and their intellectual bards did not build a historical genealogy for the Nepali nation, in a different political context, the Nepali proto middle-class actors in British India did exactly that via the self-conscious fostering of the Nepali language and the writing of a *bir* (brave) history of the Nepali nation (P. Onta 1996a, 1996b).

The post-Rana and especially the Panchayati state appropriated this *bir* history of Nepal as one of the central themes of Nepali nation culture. Backed by the state apparatus, this national culture was both elaborated in and disseminated through print, radio and visual media as well as educational resource materials.⁴ But detailed studies of its characteristics and significance and the ways in which it was disseminated remain to be done (cf. Gaige 1975, Hutt 1994a, Pigg 1992). Given the centrality of the Nepali language in the construction of this national culture, written discourses in that language are important for any study of the national narratives about Nepal.

While some foreign scholars have led the way in the study of governmental discourses on the Nepali nation (e.g., Borgstrom 1980, Burghart 1984, 1996, Höfer 1979), most of them, in the words of one member of their tribe, "continue to produce accounts and studies of Nepali society without having read anything written by members of that society in their own national language" (Hutt 1994a:84). The political economy of being a Nepal-scholar outside of Nepal thus far, in the main, has not required a close familiarity with writings produced in any of the languages used in Nepal. Since it goes without saying that both Nepali and foreign scholars of Nepal would be more able to understand the complexities of recent Nepali society if they also read what is being produced in various Nepali languages, this status quo is no longer acceptable scholarly practice (Des Chene 1995, 1996; see also Onta and Des Chene 1995). In this essay I look at one specific type of Nepali language writing - school textbooks - in which the project of creating and disseminating a national historical narrative was embodied.

The nationalization of the past under the Panchayat system created a sensibility of a shared history - I shall call this *Rastriya Itihas* (RI), literally "National History" - amongst inhabitants of Nepal. The writing of history as RI and its teaching in schools through standardized textbooks - a key means of its dissemination - were at the center of the state-sponsored effort to make students into citizens socialized and loyal to "a particular image of the nation" (Shah 1993:9).⁵ A full-blown study of this process is not possible here. Instead I discuss one set of examples drawn from Panchayat period textbooks having to do with Balbhadra to highlight some aspects of the making of RI. The specific content of these textbook lessons will be analyzed to reveal the particular idea of "nationhood" that was being deployed by the state via its education system. I argue that the making of RI involved a project of "national pruning." Since the narrative of RI needed to be simple, clear and elegant, uncomfortable and discordant facts were eliminated from it. Producing a people socialized to accept glorified images of the nation was made a manageable project by, among other things, cleansing RI of any ambivalence. I begin by describing the educational plans that shaped the RI disseminated in these textbooks.⁶

Educating Nepal: The Plans

As is well-known, the Rana rulers (1846 - 1951) of Nepal were not interested in making public education available to Nepalis at large. Therefore, for most of their century-plus rule in Nepal, apart from the Durbar School which catered to the children of Rana and Rana-affiliated families and a few other Sanskrit and monastic schools, public educational

institutions were largely non-existent (G. Sharma 2043 v.s.). In the early decades of this century, the students in Durbar School were required to study the history of India and Britain but courses on the history and geography of Nepal were not taught there (B. Pandey 2039 v.s.:148, 157).⁷ In the 1940s - the last decade of the Rana regime - several primary and secondary schools were opened in different parts of the country (Swar 2037 v.s.:8-26). When Rana rule ended in 1951, it was recognized that "the dawn of the democratic era" (Upraity 1959:1) had arrived and democracy required education.

Trailokya N. Upraity, one of the key players in the making of the first education plan for Nepal in the 1950s, characterized that moment in the following manner:

With this dawn, there came an awakening of the need for education. There was an urgent desire for the recognition of our people's rights to education in our democracy, and, consequently, Nepal had to reshape her educational framework to meet the requirements of these changing times. In order to make democracy a real success, people had to be properly educated in the shortest possible time (Upraity 1959:3).

Amidst various experimentations in governance at the center, a Board of Education was established in 1952 and it in turn recommended the appointment of a National Education Planning Commission (NEPC) the following year. The NEPC began its work in March 1954 with American advisory and financial aid. To be able to make a long-term educational plan for the country, it first set out to do a survey of the existing educational institutions and their facilities and identify the country's educational needs. In trying to do these tasks, the NEPC was challenged to overcome many obstacles. In the words of Upraity, there "were no precedents to follow, no established principles to guide, no experienced and trained surveyors to lead" (Upraity 1959:3).

Apart from the paucity of material resources, the NEPC discovered a bewildering variety of teaching curricula in the various types of schools - English-style schools, sanskrit pathshalas, Gandhi-inspired Basic Schools and monastic institutions like Gompas - that were operating in different parts of Nepal in 1954 (R. Pandey et al. 1956:39-46). The heterogeneity of the curricula as well as the population at large was recognized as a challenge by the NEPC whose responsibilities included the planning and developing of a long range "unified and national system of education" for Nepal, a country situated "at the crossroads of two ancient civilizations, China on the North and India on the South" (Upraity 1959:4). In fact when its report was

completed on 1st March 1955, the NEPC explicitly recognized this particular task in the following words under a chapter heading "Need for Education in Nepal Today":

[O]ur isolation has made us proud and nationalistic, and we wish to remain so. We wish to develop our national individuality, our heroism, and our reputation among other countries of the world. During the last few centuries we have neglected these essential characteristics of all strong states - national pride, virility, individuality - because we have allowed ourselves to go into darkness. Education must restore these values to our country (R. Pandey et al. 1956:74).

These words were later included verbatim in "The Five Year Plan for Education in Nepal" (1956 - 1961) drafted in July 1956 on the basis of the NEPC's Report (Government of Nepal 1957:2). The rationale for educational planning at the national level was thus made clear by stating that the "dawn of the democratic era" required that education be "of a national type to meet the nation's aspirations, wants and needs." A single system of education that was "national in character and suited to the genius of the people" needed to be planned to replace "the wasteful hotch-potch efforts" prevalent until that time (R. Pandey et al. 1956:74-5). Such a system of planned "National Education", it was said, would "develop the individual" - culturally, aesthetically and physically - and "develop citizenship" in all Nepalis (R. Pandey et al. 1956:80-1) while restoring the "virility" of the Nepali state.⁸

Data from 1959 suggests that concrete work toward uniformity in school curricula envisaged in the first five year plan had barely begun. It records the continuance of heterogeneity in the types of schools and a spectacular growth in English-style primary schools during the late 1950s (Upraity 1962:71-77, 230). The Education Minister was quoted in August 1960 as saying, "There is still a great intermixture of the various systems in the educational structure of the country and a democratic national system of education is the imperative need of the hour."⁹ Upon the recommendation of the NEPC, His Majesty's Government adopted the national primary school curriculum in 1959 which made the teaching of Nepali language compulsory for all classes in all schools. With respect to the language of instruction in primary schools, the NEPC had recommended that Nepali be "the medium of instruction, exclusively from the third grade on" and no other languages be taught in the primary schools, even optionally, for "few children will have need for them, [and] they would hinder the teaching of

Nepali" (R. Pandey et al. 1956:104). Through such a policy it actually hoped that other languages would become extinct in Nepal. In this connection the NEPC report explicitly states:

The study of a non-Nepali *local* tongue would mitigate against the effective development of Nepali, for the student would make greater use of it than Nepali — at home and in the community — and thus Nepali would remain a "foreign" language. If the younger generation is taught to use Nepali as the basic language then other languages will gradually disappear, and greater national strength and unity will result (Pandey et al. 1956:97).

Education Materials organization (later renamed Janak Education Materials Centre) was established in the fall of 1960 and Nepali writers were asked to prepare appropriate textbooks (A. Pradhan 2034 v.s.:131).

The Royal 'coup' by King Mahendra in December 1960 put an end to a brief experiment in multi-party democracy and initiated an era of relatively more autocratic monarchical rule in Nepal. In 1961, the All Round National Education Committee was established. While it did not recommend fundamental alterations in the previously designed curricula for the schools (G. N. Sharma 1980:6), it suggested slight revisions to include the biographies of "national *bir purusharu* , patriots and martyrs" as well as lessons on *rajbhakti* (A. Pradhan 2034 v.s.:131).¹⁰ Without doubt, the theme of *rajbhakti* - service to the monarchy - served to help legitimate the assumption of autocratic power by the king. Nepali language was further reinforced as the language of instruction (His Majesty's Government [HMG] 2019 v.s.). Educationists talked about giving students "training for nationalism" (A. B. Shrestha 1962).¹¹ Some years later, a government publication stated as one of the broad purposes of primary education "the political, economic and cultural regeneration of Nepal" while one of its specific objectives was to

develop civic competencies - attitudes of responsibility and cooperation, appreciation of our struggle for democracy and the contributions of our national heroes, understanding of the working of democracy, skills in civic participation, a feeling of national unity and solidarity, a desire for self-sufficiency and willingness to help oneself, etc (HMG 1967:13-14).

Information on the deliberations held prior to the production of textbooks which were put together in conformity with the above objectives is scant

(cf. Rutter 1970). However, by the late 1960s uniformity in school curricula and textbooks was in place at a much greater level than ever before. Panchayat's nationalization of school culture also extended to other non-textual forms. In April 1961 students in all educational institutions were required to recite the national anthem at the beginning of each school day and at the beginning and end of all school functions. All the schools were told to keep a portrait of His Majesty the King in their premises (G. Devkota 1983:349). Students were also taught other national songs, generically referred to as *rastriya git*. Some of these songs were reproduced in textbooks and a majority of them were made available to the students and the population at large via the radio.¹² The most famous of them all, written by the poet Madhav Prasad Ghimere, contained the refrain:

*Gauncha Git Nepali
Jyotiko Pankha Ucali
Jaya Jaya Jaya Hey Nepal
Sundar Santa Bisal.*

Nepalis sing a song
While lifting a flag of light
Glory, Glory, Glory to Nepal
Which is beautiful, peaceful and great.¹³

The national anthem and the *rastriya* songs gradually displaced the Saraswati *bandana* (prayer) with which children began their day in school in the 1950s. Generating "a feeling of national unity and solidarity" by making students recite early in the morning words that evoked grand images of the Nepali nation had become more important than praying to Saraswati, the Hindu goddess of learning.

By the end of the decade, signs of governmental displeasure with education in Nepal were again becoming obvious. King Mahendra asked the National Education Advisory Council to look into the nation's needs and come up with a new national education plan. The outcome was the announcement of the New Education System Plan (NESP) in 1971. But when Mahendra died in early 1972, the responsibility to implement this Plan fell to the government headed by King Birendra, who as the Crown Prince had been closely involved in its formulation.¹⁴ The NESP was prepared with the objective "to produce citizens who, with full faith in the country and the Crown, will conduct themselves in accordance with the Panchayat System and to meet the manpower requirements of the (sic) development through the spread of scientific and technical education" (HMG 1971:v). It was

marketed as "the culmination of the process of educational reforms started as early as 1954" (Ragsdale 1989:205).¹⁵ Documents related to this Plan explicitly acknowledged the less-than-successful results of the previous two decades as far as the molding of a national educational system was concerned. Mohammad Mohsin, one of the chief architects of the NESP, wrote:

Our experiences of the last two decades make it clear that the nation-building process cannot be self-perpetuating and self-sustaining unless our education system and its processes are compatible with the needs of national development and the fundamental basis of national polity....With its population comprising an amalgam of diverse ethnic groups, Nepal's major responsibility is to formulate a comprehensive, co-ordinated and dynamic base of national heritage for all the distinct traditions and communities. This is the major objective of the National Education System Plan (1974:1-2).¹⁶

In the Plan itself, this double agenda of nation-building - development and integration - was stated unequivocally:

The Plan is primarily aimed at counter-acting the elitist bias of the inherited system of education by linking it more effectively to productive enterprises and egalitarian principles....The Plan calls for unifying education into one productive system that serves the country's needs and aspirations. The concept of education as an end to white-collar jobs is being replaced by a new concept that regards education as an investment in human resources for the development of the country (HMG 1971:i).

Tractors and modern machines do not function or maintain themselves without manipulation. Again, roads and tracks are not laid-out by natural volition just as sectional parochialism cannot be transformed into social cohesion without deliberate effortBut politicisation of the traditional multiethnic Nepalese societies will not lead to national solidarity and independent sovereign nationhood without a central guidance in planned socialisation...(aimed) at coordinating the various economic and social interests, harmonizing diverse multi-lingual traditions into a single nationhood, consolidating the loyalty and faith of the Crown and (accelerating) socio-economic progress in order to transform the geo-political entity of Nepal into a positive emotional integration (HMG 1971:1-2).

The Plan's major aspects were delineated in a leaflet distributed by the government to the citizens at large. To fulfill its agenda of national integration, the NESP sought to use school education to "preserve, develop, and propagate the national language and literature, culture and arts" (HMG 1971:8). Nepali was reconfirmed as the medium of instruction in the primary and secondary schools. The NESP recognized the textbook as the "most important item of educational material" as it was the only such thing "used throughout the country" (HMG 1971:32). New textbooks were prepared including ones for a separate subject called "Panchayat." These books elaborated the political philosophy of the Panchayat system and informed secondary school students of their rights and duties as citizens of Nepal under that system.¹⁷ Extra curricular activities that fostered the overall objectives of the NESP were made mandatory in the schools (HMG 2044 v.s.b).

So while there were some differences in the particular agendas enunciated in the various plans announced between 1955 and 1971, they were remarkably similar in their pronouncements regarding the role of education in nation-building.¹⁸ The first plan envisaged education to develop a virile national individuality and pride and restore Nepal's heroism and reputation in the international community of nation-states. It argued that such a project had not been carried out in the past few centuries because Nepalis as a people had allowed themselves to go into "darkness."¹⁹ Its project of developing citizenship was retained in the 1960s when education was supposed to inculcate an appreciation of Nepal's struggle for democracy and the role of national heroes toward that and other goals as well as generate a sentiment of national solidarity. The NESP explicitly stated that education was central to a process of planned socialization of diverse communities into a positively emotionally integrated single nationhood. With respect to rhetorical differences, we might note that while the first plan talked about planning a national education "suited to the genius of the people," the NESP aimed to produce a people via national education suited to the state and its agenda. As Burghart notes for the political culture of Panchayat democracy (1994:1-2), in the former case, the nation as agent expresses its genius through the state's education plan while in the latter the state as agent builds the nation. Each of these successive plans tried rhetorically to justify its own existence by pointing to the failures of the previous plans. While reading the plan documents one gets the feeling of repeated beginnings but they do not prevent us from seeing the cumulative nationalization of school curricula that happened over the 1960s and the 1970s.²⁰

Making Nepal Bir: Balbhadra in Nalapani

Producing a people imbued with national pride and a sense of civic responsibility required, among other things, lessons on a common history. Restoring Nepal's heroism internationally and overcoming the "darkness" of the Rana century via education that promised a bright and democratic future for everyone in Nepal through *bikas* (development) meant that this common history had to be rendered as RI in what I would call the *bir to bikas* (Brave to Development) narrative mode.²¹ In this mode, the years between the early 1740s (when the conquest campaigns of Prithvinarayan Shah began) and 1816 (when the Treaty of Sagauli put a definitive end to the period of expansion) is identified as the *bir* (brave) era of RI.²² This golden age of Nepali heroism then disappears into the black hole of Rana rule until 1951 when the era of *bikas* (development) is said to begin. The *bir* era of RI in the textbooks is more often than not reduced to an onomastic drill (Makolkin 1992:211-17) of brave warriors and their war campaigns. The list begins with Prithvinarayan Shah and includes Bahadur Shah, Amarsingh Thapa, Bhakti Thapa and Balbhadra. The cultural terrain of the nation as described by *bir* history provides individual characteristic to the land on which development agendas - mostly imported from elsewhere - were implemented.

The territorial ambitions of an expanding Gorkhali state in the foothills of the Himalayas had begun to clash with the colonial Company state in the plains of India by the early 19th century (Pemble 1971, Stiller 1973). In the context of competing claims over land in the central Tarai, the two sides went to war in late 1814. It is not necessary here to discuss in detail the state of affairs that led to this war, nor to describe its campaigns. For our purposes, suffice it to note that the Company army, with little prior experience in fighting wars in the hills, fared disastrously in the early phases of the war (Pemble 1971, Stiller 1976:352-59). It was in the first of the early campaigns that a unit of Company troops, led by General Gillespie, met a few hundred Nepali soldiers led by Balbhadra Kunwar in a fort in a place called Nalapani near the city of Dehra Dun.²³ The battle that was involved in the British takeover of this fort was, by all accounts, fierce. Gillespie and several of his subordinates were killed in the initial attack. The second British assault was launched weeks later after reinforcements had arrived and even then, Balbhadra and his soldiers are said to have fought admirably. When the situation inside the fort became unbearable due to lack of water and other supplies, and due to the continuous bombardment by the British, Balbhadra and some of his subordinates escaped to another location in the war territory. When the British army entered the fort, it is said, it

found dead and dying Nepali soldiers and women and children, who also had participated in the fighting.²⁴

The above facts, common to most narratives of the battle of Nalapani, are also part of the stories presented in Panchayat era textbooks. One such story in a Nepali textbook for students of grade four, presented as a drama, begins with Balbhadra reading a letter which was sent to him before the onset of hostilities (Khanal 2028 v.s.:105-9). He says, "These English are again looking for an excuse, they say they will attack our country!" He then orders one of his subordinates to assemble all of the soldiers in the fort. Addressing the soldier-crowd he says, "My brave soldiers! I have just been informed that the English have threatened to go to war with us. It seems like they will attack us imminently. The time has come to show the name of our country and our devotion to our king. When will we get a better opportunity to show our bravery? Let us promise in the name of God that until there is a drop of blood left in our bodies, we will not surrender to the enemy. Jaya Nepal!" His soldiers repeat "Jaya Nepal" – Glory to Nepal – after him.²⁵ The rest of the first scene consists of a conversation between Balbhadra and his wife, Kamala, about the issue of the participation of women in the war. Kamala tells her husband that the women in the fort can lift guns against the enemy and supply the necessary ammunition to the men. They can feed the men on time, she adds, as well as provide first aid to the wounded. "How can we do nothing when such a problem strikes our country?", she asks.

The second scene recounts the death of British officers including that of Gillespie. When one soldier comes with the news that Gillespie had been killed, Balbhadra says "When have the brave Nepalis been afraid of these [i.e. English]?" The drama then mentions how water to the fort was diverted by the British and in its lack, conditions inside the fort became unbearable. Balbhadra then rounded up those who were still alive, and led the group as it left the fort. They then drank water and even as the enemy was confused as to what they were doing, Balbhadra turned to them and said, "You enemy, you could not beat us in war but tricked us (by denying us our water). We will now meet you again in Jitgadhi." The British are said to have just stared at the departing group led by Balbhadra.

In the poem entitled "Nala-Pani" reproduced in the Nepali textbook I read in grade five, the second verse describes Nepal as a small country that was as beautiful as a flower and then blames a nameless enemy for trying to capture it (Adhikari et al. 2031 v.s.:93-5). The savior, Balbhadra, is said to have fought off the attack by defending the fort at Nalapani tirelessly. The khukuris glittered on the top of the hill-fortress as they sliced the enemy like radishes. Like the thunder in the sky, Nepalis, including women and

children, are said to have fought bravely at Nalapani at a great loss to the enemy until they found a way to stop the water-source to the fort. The poem ends by saying that the story of Nalapani, written in blood years ago, is still fresh (in the memory of Nepalis).

The essay on Balbhadra in the same textbook begins with the following sentence, "Balbhadra is a hero who made Nepal famous" (Adhikari et al. 2031 v.s.: 108-111). It then goes on to say that he fought bravely to prevent Nepal from falling into the hands of the English. Famous as the battle of Nalapani, this war was fought not only by soldiers, but also, it stresses, by women and children who gave up their lives for the country. It mentions that the English put up a sign in Dehradun in recognition of the bravery of Balbhadra and his soldiers. Rarely in the history of the world has one enemy praised another, it adds, before describing Balbhadra as that uniquely brave figure that deserved such an honor.

In addition to commonplace information about the encounter, this essay mentions that Balbhadra's father and grandfather were both brave and served in the army, with his grandfather reaching a respectable post in the time of Prithvinarayan Shah. It acknowledges that because of the surprise beginning of the war, about 300 women and children who were in the fort could not escape and thus participated in the war with approximately 300 soldiers. The last paragraph of the essay, after once again praising Balbhadra for his courage and bravery, goes on to say, "He wanted to die fighting in a war. During his time, it was an honor to die in a battle. Balbhadra was born in a brave family, he fought bravely for the country, and died fighting in a war. Therefore he is one of our eternal national icons."

In these lessons, the war episode at Nalapani and Balbhadra's role in it are simultaneously turned into a moment when Nepal's sovereignty was challenged by evil imperial forces and its separate independent nationhood was made famous. It also represents an occasion in which brave Nepalis got an opportunity to prove their devotion to their king and their country through their use of the khukuri and more importantly through the ultimate sacrifice of their lives. The loss at Nalapani is explained as being possible only due to an unfair trick on the part of the British who it is said, despite winning the fort, honoured Balbhadra and his soldiers with a memorial. Evocation of "Jaya Nepal" and the idea of "brave" death – death on the battle field on behalf of the country – together elevate Balbhadra's story to a celebration of Nepali nationhood and a reminder of one's duties as a citizen of Nepal. However, we also need to note that the ideal citizen is the patriotic *bir purus* (brave man) whose individual bravery sustains nationhood and celebration of whom is an essential part of being proud of one's nation. National identity itself is embodied in his virility and this

gendered notion of the nation is the image propagated through the education system. While Balbhadra's wife and other women in the fort participated in the war, their role is marked as ancillary to the real business of war conducted by Balbhadra and his men (cf. R. Sharma 2017 v.s, Sundas 1995).

Even before the nationalization of textbooks in the 1960s and the 1970s, stories about Balbhadra were widely available. Two of these were published in 1940, one in Darjeeling and the other in Kathmandu. Some comparison of these with the textbook stories mentioned above will help us to see how the nationalization of history pruned ambivalence out of the Nalapani encounter and presented it as an example of unadulterated Nepali bravery at work. I begin with the version written by Sagarmani Acharyadixit and published in Kathmandu in 1940 in the journal, *Sarada* (Acharyadixit 2026 v.s.[1997 v.s.]).²⁶ He begins his essay by describing Balbhadra as the "glory of Gorkha, extreme patriot, clever war leader and brave." Then he says that the unparalleled bravery shown by the mere six hundred children of "Arya Gorkha" in Nalapani is an event that deserves to be described in golden letters "not only in the history of Nepal, but also that of India." He continues:

Bravery, war skills, patriotism and devotion to the king shown by brave Gorkhas [on that occasion] are second to none [including] those that can be found in any civilized *jati*. Gorkha *jati* might be poor and few in number but they have demonstrated how ready they are to sacrifice everything to save the independence of the country (2026 v.s.[1997 v.s.]:290).²⁷

Written a few years before the end of colonial rule in India, the author reminds the readers that unlike native states in India, Nepal is an independent country. Nepal's independence is then attributed to the work of brave souls like Amarsingh and Balbhadra who were willing to risk their lives while serving their country. The rest of the essay provides a predictable account of the Nalapani encounter.

In this essay we can find many attributes of an openly ambivalent nationalism. The reference to Balbhadra as a glory of Gorkha is interesting. Although later in the same paragraph the author refers to Nepal by that name, the mention of "glory of Gorkha" shows that the tradition of thinking about the kingdom as the possession of the House of Gorkha (Stiller 1973) still persisted in 1940. In fact the switch in nomenclature from "the possession of Gorkha" to "Nepal" in governmental discourse in Nepal occurs sometime around 1930 (Burghart 1984:118-19; cf. P. Onta

1996a), but here we see the persistence of the old name a decade later. Similarly, along the same line, we must note Acharyadixit's reference to the people as Gorkha *jati* and not Nepalis. It is in this context that we can say that the evocation of "Jaya Nepal" in the drama version of the textbook discussed earlier is anachronistic for 1814. The unproblematic reference to a Nepali nation in 1815 is yet another evidence of pruning because by seamlessly inserting the phrase "Jaya Nepal" in the text, it smooths over the complexities of the past whereas in Acharyadixit the ambivalence in nomenclature remains.²⁸

The reference to Balbhadra's soldiers as the children of "Arya Gorkha" also confirms the above point. Although no complete caste and ethnicity returns for these soldiers are available, there are strong reasons to believe that many of the soldiers were Magars and men of all *jats* recruited from Garhwal. Eden Vansittart, who was the chief Gurkha recruitment officer for the British during 1888-95, mentions that Balbhadra's soldiers "belonged mostly to the regiment known as the Purana Gurakh which consists entirely of Magars" (1896:40).²⁹ Acharyadixit simply refers to all the soldiers as "Arya Gorkha," to nationalize ethnicity with a particular Hindu slant. While it is hard to say how intermingled his notion of Arya was with the version of national caste hierarchy elaborated in the *Muluki Ain*, there is no doubt that Arya refers loosely only to bahun (Brahman) and chetri (Kshatriya) castes of Nepal and not to the other groups such as the Magars and the Gurungs.

By the time the textbook versions are produced in the 1960s and the 1970s, two other indications of ambivalence present in Acharyadixit are pruned out. One is the statement which acknowledges the poverty of the Gorkha *jati* even as it goes on to celebrate their patriotism. Never is the theme of poverty discussed in the same breath as Nepali bravery in the textbook versions of RI. The other is the statement that Balbhadra's story should be described in golden letters "not only in the history of Nepal, but also that of India." The Balbhadra of my textbook is the national symbol of Nepali sovereignty, independence, and bravery. The suggestion that he could also be part of the history of India is inconceivable to the exclusive national sensibilities of those educationists who compiled the textbooks of the Panchayat period.³⁰

The other text published in 1940 - this one in Darjeeling - was an essay by Surya Bikram Gyawali entitled "Bir Balbhadra." This is one among many historical biographies that Gyawali wrote (P. Sharma 1974:115, V. Pradhan 2044 v.s.:80-8) and is an important early text of the project in which the history of the "unification" of Nepal was rendered in the *bir* mode in British India.³¹ Written to make the story of Balbhadra popular among young adults, this essay is fairly detailed. Although presented in a highly

patriotic framework, ambivalent themes pruned out from the later textbooks mark Gyawali's essay.³² He begins by tracing the family linkages between Balbhadra and the Ranas who ruled Nepal then. The grandfather of the first Rana Prime Minister Jang Bahadur (whose name was Ranajit Kunwar) and the father of Balbhadra, Chandrabir Kunwar were first cousins (2018 v.s.[1997 v.s.]:1-2). The later textbooks, written in the *bir to bikas* mode of RI in which the Rana era was depicted as an age of darkness, make no mention of the fact that Balbhadra was such a close relative of Jang Bahadur. Gyawali further writes that among Balbhadra's soldiers were men of all jats recruited from Garhwal and nearby areas and Magar soldiers belonging to the Purano Gorakh battalion (ibid:6). As I noted above, the Magar ethnicity of the soldiers is nowhere mentioned in the later textbooks where they are simply referred to as Nepalis. Nor is there any mention of the soldiers from Garhwal, a place that was no longer a part of Nepal.

While the details of the war are familiar, Gyawali mentions that after the treaty of Sagauli, Balbhadra returned to Nepal but soon after that went to join the army of the Sikh king Ranjit Singh. While he mentions that being aware of the demonstrated bravery of the Nepalis Ranjit Singh recruited them in his army, he does not mention what prompted Balbhadra, the hero of Nalapani and the embodiment of Nepali bravery and patriotism, to go and join this foreign army.³³ Gyawali later mentions that Balbhadra died fighting for the Sikhs against the Afghans (ibid:13-15). Commenting on this, he writes that although this was a "brave death" it would have been even more respectable had Balbhadra died fighting for his country. The fact that he died in a foreign country while in the service of Ranjit Singh should teach us a lesson about how we need to be loyal to our employer (*noon ko sojho*) writes Gyawali, but it can not serve as an example of how, like Bhakti Thapa, we need to be always ready to give up our lives for the sake of our country (cf. R Sharma 2017 v.s.).³⁴ Nevertheless Gyawali writes that Balbhadra's name and work will be written in golden letters in the history of Nepal (2018 v.s.[1997 v.s.]:21).³⁵

In the RI textbook versions, Balbhadra's service with Ranjit Singh is passed over. This fact is omitted when the British memorial placed in his honor in Dehra Dun is quoted. Furthermore while talking about his death, the RI textbook version, as we saw, simply states that "Balbhadra was born in a brave family, he fought bravely for the country, and died fighting in a war." It pointedly does not specify that he died fighting for the Sikhs and leaves the students with the impression that he had died in some other battle between Nepal and the British following the one in Nalapani. Why it does so is pretty clear: one cannot make someone "one of our eternal national

icons" while acknowledging that he died fighting someone else's war, even if he had the impressive prior record in Nalapani.³⁶

If RI is an onomastic drill of *bir* Nepalis, why is there such an obsession with Balbhadra? Why aren't other brave warriors from the unification era - Amarsingh Thapa, Bhakti Thapa and others - remembered as much?³⁷ In fact the significance of this question looms large after Gyawali's above-mentioned comparison of Balbhadra with Bhakti Thapa. This comparison raises the possibility that under another process of pruning, a different version of RI could have been shaped with respect to the 1814-16 war. That version could have valorized Bhakti Thapa as the exemplary figure of the entire war for dying for the country. It could have pruned out Balbhadra for living through a defeat or for joining the Sikh army later. This possibility raises the question, what was at stake to hold onto Balbhadra even when the ambivalent facts related to him as noted above had to be suppressed? A definitive answer to this question is hard to give. However I would posit that extracting a heroic story of even temporary supremacy over the British from an overall defeat is the key to understanding the obsession with Balbhadra. It might be recalled here that the 1814-16 conflagration brought an end to the expansionary era of the Gorkhali empire which began in the early 1740s with Prithvinarayan Shah's campaign of conquest (Pant 2021 v.s.a). The Treaty of Sagauli which concluded this war included significant territorial losses to the Gorkhali empire (Stiller 1976).³⁸ This truncation is evoked even today in nationalist writings. Take for instance, the following poem entitled *Sagauliko Ghau* by poet Phanindra Nepal (born 2015 v.s.):

When the pride of my ancestors fills my chest
 I see Nepal in my own palms
 Opening up my fist
 I see Nepal's map
 Increasing in size at the speed of a kite released in the sky
 Up to Teesta
 Spreading up to Kangra
 In victory I smile liberally
 In happiness I dance freely
 But when my own history mocks me
 I burn internally
 I tire entirely
 When the wound of Sagauli returns to my heart
 I worry because Greater Nepal is not in my palm
 Like a river in which the water is drying
 I see the shape of my country

Being reduced to Mechi
 Being shrunk to Mahakali
 I simply close my fist
 Tight and more tightly
 The more I close my fist
 The more I feel suffocated at the shrinking of each line in my palm
 The more I get drowned in darkness (Nepal 2048 y.s.:108-9).

In a war with such disastrous consequences, the battle at Nalapani where the commander leading the attack for the British, General Gillespie was killed, could be turned into a celebration of the *bir kal* more easily than the other encounters. The fact that during the nineteenth century even the British narrators of the war had given special attention to this event made this process easier. The long history of transmission of the Balbhadra story by the British before it was picked up and reproduced by the Nepali nationalist writers in this century has made the story excessively plausible.³⁹ It has become the truth. Ironically, early British accounts (like Williams 1874) are suitable for *bir* readings just because they are engaged in their redemption of a defeat, albeit only an initial one, by celebrating Balbhadra. On the winning side a partial defeat required special attention while on the losing side a partial victory could redeem national pride. In fact in RI renditions of the Nalapani encounter the larger narrative of the entire war and of ultimate defeat is mostly pruned away.

Making Gaje Ghale Disappear

The case of Balbhadra examined above is one example of how the pruning of history was made part of the construction of RI in nationalized textbooks. As we saw, while the representation of Balbhadra as a national icon of bravery could already be found in writings predating those textbooks, the ambivalences contained in the earlier renditions were filtered out from the later textbook versions. Another process of filtration occurred when stories popular in the pre-nationalized textbooks that could not fit into non-ambivalent RI were simply dropped from the textbooks of the 1960s and later. I present one example of the latter here.

The story is about Gaje Ghale.⁴⁰ Those who were in school in the 1950s and the early 1960s and read Nepali language primer books put together in Darjeeling will remember him. In a chapter entitled *Jamadar Gaje Ghaley*, VC in *Nepali Sahitya* (Second Part) prepared by Parasmani Pradhan and Rudramani Pradhan as a Nepali language primer for grade two, the students were told how a man who had grown up in the village of Barpak in central Nepal and joined the British Indian Gurkha Regiments as a Recruit Boy in

1935 went on to capture an important Japanese post in the Basha hill in Burma in 1945 (Pradhan and Pradhan 1956:38-46).⁴¹ Undaunted by profuse blood loss as a consequence of being hit by enemy bullets, Ghaley was described as leading his platoon in assault after assault against the Japanese until Basha hill was captured. His unlimited courage, steadfastness and unusual bravery are beyond description, the story maintained, and for his commendable work, he was given the Victoria Cross (VC) by the British government.

What is interesting to note about this story is that it is not made out to be an explicit embodiment of any nation's or *jati's* bravery. It is simply rendered as an account of the courage and brave deeds of a single individual. Yet we must note that even without explicit statement, this textbook story converted Ghaley into one of the heroes of Nepali school children. When textbooks were nationalized in the latter part of the 1960s, this story did not appear in them. The generations socialized in nationalized textbooks did not learn about Gaje Ghaley or any of the other Gurkha VC winners in their school. I had not heard about Ghaley until after I began to read British accounts of the Gurkhas in 1990.

How may we read the disappearance of Gaje Ghale from the textbooks I and my generation of Nepalis read? As I have suggested the objective of these schoolbooks was to socialize my generation of Nepalis to a vision of the nation without ambivalences. This meant that problematic topics like the recruitment of Nepalis in foreign armies as Gurkhas had to be excised from school textbooks. Just as Balbhadra's later service in the Sikh army and his eventual death fighting for Ranjit Singh had to be filtered out of RI, poor Nepalis working for another state's army as Gurkha soldiers, despite their individual achievements, could not be elevated to the national pantheon of *birs* within RI. Gurkha soldiers and their fame as brave warriors could not be easily reconciled within the master narrative of the *bir* and independent Nepali nation. Recognition of Gurkha bravery by reproducing the story of Gaje Ghaley being awarded the VC raises uncomfortable questions regarding the claims of RI. The fact of a Nepali citizen's blood spilled elsewhere and for someone else's cause directly mocks the RI's *bir to bikas* narrative. The recognition of Gurkha service makes the Nepali nation, symbolically speaking, (as well as the state in more practical ways), dependent on others. RI's claim to Nepal's greatness is compromised. Instead of dealing with this messy and complex issue, the makers of RI decided to just leave it aside (see Onta 1996b).⁴²

For students of history familiar with nationalist historiographic traditions of colonial India and elsewhere, the Nepali case provides some surprises. As is well-known for the case of India for instance, one of the main ways in

which nationalist historians described India's colonial encounter was by portraying British rule as the economic exploitation of their motherland (Chandra 1966). Expectations molded by such nationalist writings would anticipate Nepali nationalist narratives to portray the 1814-16 war as a case of colonial excessive violence and talk of Gurkha recruitment by an imperial power as an exploitation of Nepalis and their *bir* tradition in order to bolster the sense of nationalism even further.⁴³ However, as I have argued here, the desire to read Nepal's independence and sovereignty in its past is so strong that Balbhadra's temporary supremacy over the British becomes the story of Nepali bravery at work. The Gurkhas like Gaje Ghaley have to be erased from public memory so that a non-ambivalent and elegant RI could emerge. If nationalism is a derivative discourse of colonialism in India (Chatterjee 1986), then its genealogy and history in Nepal, although still influenced by the history of colonialism in South Asia, would have to be mapped somewhat differently.

Conclusion

I have argued here that textbook stories prepared in the 1960s and the 1970s dealing with the history of Nepal were presented in a framework that is in alignment with the objectives of the educational plans as described earlier. While making up lessons on history, textbook compilers drew upon extant narratives of certain events but carefully pruned them to make the final versions reproduced for schoolbooks fashion a *bir* and virile image of the nation. These compilers exercised yet another strategy of selection by omitting popular stories that were present in the textbooks used in the 1950s under the non-nationalized educational systems because they were problematic to the agenda of RI. Nationalism in Nepal, like nationalism everywhere, tried to produce a people as one ethnicity (cf. Balibar 1990). In the textbooks this meant leaving out the story of Gaje Ghaley and those aspects of the Balbhadra story that were problematic to a full-blown celebration of national pride. The selection of heroes and the descriptions of their place in the life of the nation needed a careful story-teller. And the story itself needed to be simple and elegant even as it evoked the grandeur of the nation.

These pruned stories of RI are *part* of the stuff that constitute the collective memory of those Nepalis schooled in the Panchayat era. They are the foundational writings that tried to inculcate in us a sense of belonging to a community sharing a national culture. Textbook history lessons were the instruments designed to fashion a collective memory of the Nepali nation in the *bir to bikas* mode. As the nationalized education system expanded to more areas within Nepal during the three decades of the

Panchayat regime, these textbooks reached places where even state newspapers like the *Gorkhapatra* did not and were read by at least a few million students in the quarter century between the late 1960s and the early 1990s.⁴⁴ If nations are "imagined communities" (Anderson 1983), then these textbooks along with other print, audio and visual media have provided the stuff with which the Nepali nation could be imagined during recent decades.

As Anderson emphasized, imagining should be understood to mean not fabrication or falsity but a process of creation. The contents of this process of creation provide the mark of differentiation for communities and nations. I have here argued that the *bir to bikas* RI has been the way in which the Nepali nation has been imagined through state-produced educational textbooks. Nationalization of the past in the *bir* mode and that of the future in the *bikas* mode have been critical to the functioning of the state in the post-Rana era. As I showed in the first section of this paper, the past is presented in the *bir* mode in order to facilitate the future in *bikas* mode via projects of citizen-crafting. *Bir* history provided the bearings of an independent land on which *bikas* projects could be enacted. With foreign money and models pouring into Nepal in the name of development, it was *bir* history that made the country's *bikas* "Nepali." It is for this reason that even as the state acknowledged its relative poverty in economic terms as exemplified by several statistical indicators, the independent nation with a gloriously *bir* past could assert its membership in the world community of nations. It is also for this reason that a sense of self-marginality in a world graded by economic development can simultaneously co-exist with a strong pride in the Nepali nation - as evidenced in the quotation with which I began this article⁴⁵ - amongst those who have grown up with the *bir to bikas* narrative as one's own history (cf. Liechty 1994:33-123).

It is not my argument that the *bir* national history constitutes the totality of the historical consciousness of all Nepalis who grew up in this country under the Panchayat regime. Given the large numbers of Nepali people who did not and still do not have broad access to nationalized education and media, to suggest as much would be absurd. In fact I do not even make the claim that all of the students who actually read the above-mentioned textbooks found the *bir to bikas* mode of imagining the Nepali nation to be totally compelling. To say this would be to grant a totalizing power to the Panchayat state and its educational apparatus. Instead we must assume that this particular mode of imagining the nation was found to be variously compelling across caste, class, gender and locational lines, the intricacies of reception being a complex story that I cannot trace here.⁴⁶ But we should remember that the production of student-citizens was not a mere fiction in

the minds of Panchayat planners of national education. While there is no easy way to know who and how many Nepalis identify with the *bir to bikas* RI, we can safely assume that the number is not insignificant. This is also evident to anyone reading newspapers and magazines across the range of political perspectives and in post-1990 debates on ethnicity in Nepal.⁴⁷

The process of pruning away ambivalence and details that do not accord with the *bir to bikas* narrative of the nation show that we must begin our study of nationalism in Nepal by examining the construction and dissemination of its foundational narratives.⁴⁸ In his famous 1882 lecture 'What is a nation?', Earnest Renan said "Getting its history wrong is part of being a nation" (quoted in Hobsbawm 1991:12). Understanding the partiality and the particularity of the "Nepal" toward which education planners sought to make us feel loyal and patriotic, is a critical step in learning how we 'got our history wrong.'⁴⁹ Moreover it is a step toward identifying who was and who was not invited to the nation-building party in more substantive ways. Hence studies that trace the history of Nepali nationalism as if it was a linear growth of an organic entity are clearly inadequate (cf. D. Adhikari 2045 v.s., Stiller 1993).

Others have suggested that, in post-1990 Nepal, it is imperative that a new national narrative be established (Fisher 1993, Shah 1993). In the face of janajati politics and the spectre of a Sri Lanka-like splintering of the nation (Sharma 1992), one strong reaction is to attempt to prune RI to a new shape, one that can somehow encompass all claims to distinctiveness while serving, like past narratives, to inculcate loyalty to the central Nepali state. While one should not set aside the seriousness with which these proposals are put forward, surely the first, and perhaps the most important task that historians can perform is not to rush to create RI for the nineties, but to examine the role of RI in making plausible a heroic account of a harmonious nation that in fact took account of so few, and so select a subset of its citizens. As the autobiographical beginning of this essay should suggest, effects of such a pruned RI, both practical ones and in people's thinking, are real. The Panchayat era was the time in which political sensibilities of all kinds presently evident were forged. Hence without a thorough understanding of RI and other nationalist narratives and sentiments consolidated and disseminated during Panchayat's three decades, it will be difficult to do any adequate analysis of the current politics of culture, ethnicity and nationalism in Nepal (cf. Des Chene 1996).

Notes

1. I am variously indebted to Madhav Bhatta, Amod Bhattarai, Kamal Dixit, Santosh Gyawali, Basanta Thapa, Ashutosh Tiwari, Nirmal M. Tuladhar and a group of friends on whom I tried the preliminary version of the argument developed here. My three sisters - Abana, Lima and Lazima Onta - have provided crucial support while I researched and wrote this paper. Véronique Bouillier, Lee Cassanelli, Kaushik Ghosh, Ashok Gurung, Harka Gurung, Om Gurung, Krishna Hachhethu, Michael Hutt, Laura Kunreuther, Maneesha Lal, Mark Liechty, Stacy Pigg, Prayag Raj Sharma, Sudhindra Sharma, Dina Siddiqi, Howard Spodek, Abhi Subedi and Rachel Tolen provided useful comments on earlier drafts. Extensive comments by Mary Des Chene on all previous drafts have enabled me to improve this paper in more ways than I can record here. While expressing gratitude to all of them I must state that I am solely responsible for the deficiencies that still remain. All translations from original Nepali texts are mine. My research was supported by a dissertation grant from the American Institute of Indian Studies. It was also assisted by a grant from the Joint Committee on South Asia of the Social Science Research Council and the American Council of Learned Societies with funds provided by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and the Ford Foundation.
2. On the first year of its implementation, students of grades one, four and eight were required to read the new textbooks. When students of these grades graduated to an upper class the following year, they read new textbooks and so on (His Majesty's Government [HMG] 2031 v.s.:6-13).
3. For a variety of recent discussions on ethnicity and national politics in Nepal see Ale Magar (2052 v.s.), Bandhu (1989), Dahal (1992, 1995), W. Fisher (1993), G. Gurung (1994), G. Gurung and Bhandari (1993), O. Gurung (1995), K. Malla (1992), Nepal Communist Party - Masal (2052 v.s.), O'Neill (1994), Panjiar (1993), R. Pradhan (1994), Raj (1993), P. Sharma (1994), Sudhindra Sharma (1994), Skar (1995), P. Tamang (1992), S. Tamang (2050 v.s., 1995) and P. Thapa (2052 v.s.). For an earlier statement see P. Rana (1971). See Bhattachan (1995) and his bibliography and P. Tamang (1991) for discussions concerning ethnicity & party-politics. See essays in the journal *Pragya* (2050 v.s.) and Sonntag (1995) for discussions concerning language-policy in post-Panchayat Nepal.
4. When a program in radio education was inaugurated at the Radio Nepal in July 1958, its main objective was "to supplement the adult literacy campaign and provide such knowledge to the illiterate adults which would help them in the possible solution of their day-to-day problems, in a manner both concrete and interesting" (S. N. Sharma 1958:120). Among the topics included for this program were lessons in history (that discussed the "life-stories of historical figures of Nepal") and cultures & religions of Nepal. In the immediate aftermath of the promulgation of the 1962 constitution of Nepal which provided the legal basis for the Partyless Panchayat System, P. M. Singh, who was then the director of Radio Nepal wrote: "The primary goal of Radio Nepal is to inculcate in the Nepali janata a sense of Nepaliness and ever growing patriotic love for Nepal through development of Nepali music" (2020 v.s.). Singh reports that between April 1962 and April 1963, the Radio Nepal broadcasted 46 radio-plays

- related to the Panchayat system in addition to regular commentaries on Panchayat philosophy and organization. A. Bhattarai (2051 v.s.), Gaige (1975), K. Gurung (1993) and Verma (1985) provide various details related to the workings of Radio Nepal. While no comprehensive studies of radio audiences have been done in Nepal limited studies conducted by New Era (1979, 1984) and RIDA (1989) provide some insights. State-owned television was started in Nepal only in the mid-1980s. The use of photography in the making of national culture is also worthy of study.
5. For an analysis of textbook materials to show how an ideology of modernization represents the relationship between national society, development and the village in Nepal in the 1980s, see Pigg (1992). Beach (1990), J. Fisher (1990), Read and Read (1968), K. Malla (1979), Skinner and Holland (1996), K. Thapa (1985) and Vir (1988) provide analyses of other aspects of modern education in Nepal. For a broadside criticism of formal education, see an essay by Laxmi P. Devkota (2050 v.s.[2002 v.s.]:213-20).
 6. Basti (2045 v.s.), Sawanta (2025 v.s.) and Amarendraraj Shrestha (1993) are examples of how the RI was disseminated via comic books. Many stories in *Balaka*, a popular children's magazine published by the Bal Mandir since the mid-1960s, were also rendered in the RI mode. See also Parajuli (n.d.).
 7. In the 1930s, history of India and Britain were taught at the Durbar School by Rudraraj Pandey and Basudev Bhattarai. By the end of the decade both had produced relevant textbooks. On the lives and works of Pandey and Bhattarai, see respectively, Siwakoti (2049 v.s.) and Bhattarai and Bhattarai (1988). For some interesting facts about the Durbar School during the 19th century, see Sharma Bhattarai (2042 v.s.).
 8. It must be pointed out here that I am highlighting only those aspects of the educational planning scene that deal directly with the reasons and the plans for the nationalization of education in Nepal. For a work that provides other details of the education planning scene of the 1950s, see Wood (1987). See also the issues of the journal, *Education Quarterly*, published from Kathmadu beginning with its first issue of March 1957. See B. Bhattarai (2025 v.s.) for a cautionary essay on patriotism written in the political context of the 1950s.
 9. Gorkhapatra of 17 August 1960 quoted in Upraity (1962:229). Upraity (1962:230) mentions that HMG of Nepal, Department of Education brought out several notices related to primary education in the Gorkhapatra of 20 November 1960 (Textbooks); 5 December 1960 (Curriculum) and 13, 16, 18 May 1961 (New Syllabus: Grades 2, 3, 4 and 5).
 10. The use of the words *bir purusharu* - brave men - is very instructive. I shall return to this point below. I have thus far been unable to locate the original report submitted by this Committee. See K. Bista (1962) and V. Jha (1962) for two statements by politicians on "Panchayat and Education." See M. Thapa (1968) for one proposal regarding what the teaching of "social studies" must entail in the context of the Panchayat System. The Government's educational bureaucracy was subsequently reorganized (Aryal 1970:44-8, 54-7).

11. In light of the argument I am making here, it is interesting to note what Shrestha writes: "The text-books should be written with a new emphasis and should be selected with due care. The social study courses should be more carefully planned. For primary classes, only selected parts of history should be taught. History dealing with family feud and class struggles should be avoided and left for college level....[Every student] should be proud of the total Nepalese culture rather than of an aspect of it" (1962:7-8; my emphasis).
12. Between April 1962 and April 1963, Radio Nepal played 225 new rastriya songs. While we need to recognize that the transmission capacity of Radio Nepal was then limited by the topographical constitution of the country and that many Nepalis were too poor to be able to own a radio, this data challenges us to pay more attention to how the RI was dispersed. To counter the second limitation noted, 17 open public listening spots for Radio Nepal had been established during the specified year and more than 40 were planned for the following year (Singh 2020 v. s.).
13. This song appears in a fourth grade Nepali language textbook under the title "Rastra Bandana" that is "Salutation to the Nation" (Khanal et al. 2028 v.s.:111). Om Gurung (who went to a school in central west Nepal) and Basanta Thapa (who went to a school in east Nepal) have generously shared with me their memories of reciting this song as school students in the 1960s. This song is retained in the fourth grade Nepali language textbook compiled in the post-Panchayat era (Pyakurel 2052 v.s.:31-5).
14. Upraity (2030 v.s.) and Sainju (2031 v.s.) defend the NESP and highlight King Birendra's connection with it.
15. Quoting a 1971 USAID/Nepal document, Skerry, Moran and Calavan write: "At the time of its introduction, the NESP was seen as a radical departure from the status quo, a Nepali 'declaration of independence from US policy dominance in education'" (1992: 233). The 'radical departure' in part is a reference to the fact that important persons involved in the making of NESP such as Dr Harka Gurung (then with the National Planning Commission, Ph. D. from the U.K.) and Mohmmad Mohsin (Ph. D. from India) had not been trained in the US unlike their predecessors in the field such as Trailokya N. Upraity. For one evaluation of the first two decades of American aid to education in Nepal, see Sellar et al. (1981). In their study of the planning experience in Nepal, Stiller and Yadav (1979) devote a chapter to the "great debates" in planning development in Nepal. It is interesting to note that while they recognize that important and controversial debates had taken place in the educational sector, they omit it from their discussion of the great debates by stating that a "national policy has been established on [this point], and whatever debate remains centres on the problem of execution rather than on the strategy to be adopted" (1979:143).
16. When he wrote this, Mohsin was the member-secretary of the National Education Committee, a body that reported directly to His Majesty the King and was responsible for the overall implementation and evaluation of the NESP (HMG 2044 v.s. a). In the second half of the 1960s, he was first a member of the Panchayat Philosophy Committee and later a research officer on Panchayat at the Home Ministry of HMG. In the second half of the 1970s he was associated with the powerful central committee of Back-to-

the-Village National Campaign. For his early views on the Panchayat system, see his essays in Mohsin and Rana (1966).

17. The leaflet is reproduced as Appendix A in Ragsdale (1989:205-11). Also see HMG (2028 v.s.), N. Jha (2044 v.s.), Mohsin (1975), and K. Shrestha (2034 v.s.). See Mali (1973) and G. Sharma (1980:i-viii) for a general discussion of how the textbooks were put together under the NESP. Yadunandan (1983) discusses some of the difficulties encountered in the production and distribution of NESP textbooks. Subsequent to the announcement of NESP, the phrase "vikasako nimti siksa" - education for development - became the state mantra in Nepal. Series of publications with that title were also brought out (Kasaju et al. 2034 v.s.). As part of NESP's agenda for higher education, masters level students were required to do one year of "National Development Service" as part of their degree requirements (Pokhrel 2034 v.s., Rongong 1975, Vaidya 2034 v.s.). The NESP recognized the potential of using the radio as a teaching medium. See Mayo et al. (1975) for a study done to examine how the radio could be better utilized to fulfill NESP's development agenda. For a sophisticated rendition of the political philosophy of the Panchayat System, see HMG (2023 v.s.).
18. For a summary account of these various plans, see K. Shrestha (1973).
19. As I discuss below, this story of decline characterized as "darkness" was intended more specifically to refer to the century-long rule of the Ranas.
20. It would be a mistake to think that there were no contemporary criticisms of these education plans. For examples of such, see Akhila Nepai Rashtriya Svatantra Vidyarthi Yuniyan (2038 v.s.), Malla (1979:82-100), G. Rana (2051 v.s.:237-243) and Sharma Acharya (2028 v.s.). Harka Gurung (1984) has argued that the NESP's egalitarian agenda – to provide education to the maximum number of Nepali children – failed because no concomitant social reforms and economic transformations necessary for its success took place. He has further argued that the Nepali elites opposed the NESP in the 1970s by sending their children to Indian boarding schools in greater numbers. He suggested that new boarding schools be opened in Nepal to stop this education-related capital flight and added, "It will also eliminate possible social conflict among Nepalese of tomorrow brought-up with diverse curricula and nurtured by ideals of different national anthems and heroes" (1984:106). See also Verma (1981:130-57).
21. I do not have much to say about the bikas end of this mode in this paper which is devoted to thinking about the bir foundations of RI that make bikas rhetoric plausible.
22. Literary historians have been the ones who have used the term bir kal (brave era) most prominently for this period (e.g. Dixit 2018 v.s., Shrestha 2047 v.s.). They argue that the dominant motif of Nepali literature of this period is bravery.
23. Dehira Dun is a city located in a valley in the hilly region of the Indian state of Uttar Pradesh. This battle is also referred to sometimes as the battle of Kalanga.
24. M. Pant (2021 v.s.b) has published contemporary letters which give some versions of "what really happened." The letters indicate that when conditions became unbearable inside the fort under British attack, some of Balbhadra's soldiers tried to desert. They were reprimanded by their leader

and most returned but some seem to have actually deserted. For another Nepali historian's rendition of the war at Nalapani, see Baburam Acharya's essay in P. Sharma et al. (2029 v.s.)

25. I return to this phrase below.
26. For one view of the importance of Sārada in the growth of modern Nepali literature, see A. Subedi (2038 v.s.:1-50).
27. Jati can be translated as community or nation.
28. It is important to note that "Jaya Nepal" does not find an entry in Turner's (1931) classic dictionary. Nor does it find an entry in Balchandra Sharma's (2019 v.s.) Nepali Sabda Kosh, published in the early days of the Panchayat System. In a dictionary sponsored by the Royal Nepal Academy and published in the early 1980s, there is an entry where its origin is described to be associated with the anti-Rana movement. It is further stated there that the phrase has become a ritual of greeting in meetings within the police and other nationalistic organizations and a way to invoke patriotic sentiments at the end of public lectures (Pokhrel et al. 2040 v.s.:476). Balkrishna Sama credits Sukraraj Shastri for being the first person to write "Jaya Nepal" in the early 1930s (2029 v.s.:108). Literary historian Tanasharma states that in the immediate aftermath of the execution of four anti-Rana activists in 1941, 'revolutionary poet' Gopal Prasad Rimal started saying "Jaya Nepal" as a form of greeting (2027 v.s.:115). In his autobiography, Rimal's friend and fellow activist in anti-Rana politics, Daman Raj Tuladhar suggests that it was a larger group of people working together that started the tradition of saying "Jaya Nepal" as a form of greeting (2039 v.s.:85-87). It is possible that the line "Jaya Jaya Jaya Hey Nepal" in Madhav Prasad Ghimere's *rastriya git* quoted earlier was partially responsible for making the phrase "Jaya Nepal" popular. The program for children broadcasted by Radio Nepal – Bal Karyakram – of which I was a regular listener in my childhood also ended by evoking "Jaya Nepal." While I cannot date the beginning of this practice precisely, I remember hearing it in 1975. P. Malla (2045 v.s.:101) ends his play on the Nalapani encounter by making Balbhadra evoke "Jaya Gorakh, Jaya Kali."
29. Suryabikram Gyawali (2018 v.s.[1997 v.s]:6) makes note of this as well. Although J. Gurung (2041 v.s.) mentions the participation of Gurungs in the campaigns prior to and during the 1814-16 war, he does not say how many of Balbhadra's soldiers were Gurungs.
30. For a powerful statement on how exclusive national sensibilities of the recent centuries have limited emotional and physical movements possible in ancient times, see Ghosh (1992). We must also note the precursors to national pruning in Acharyadixit's text. The Dehra Dun memorial placed by the British to honor Balbhadra reads: "This is inscribed as a tribute of respect, for our gallant adversary, Bulbudder, Commander of the fort, and his brave Goorkhas, who were afterwards, while in the service of Runjeet Singh, shot down in their ranks, to the last man, by Afghan artillery" (Williams 1874:136). This memorial was erected after Balbhadra's death on 14 March 1823 (D. Pant 2022 v.s.). Acharyadixit, just like my textbook, reproduces the statement from the memorial by excising the part that mentions Balbhadra's service in Ranajit Singh's army.

31. I have discussed this subject in detail elsewhere (Onta 1996a, 1996b). For more details on the life and work of Surya Bikram Gyawali, see J. Chetri (1993) and Pramod Pradhan (2044 v.s.). D. Vajracharya (2044 v.s.) highlights Gyawali's contribution to the study of the history of modern Nepal.
32. The fact that Gyawali's text was written for young adults (2018 v.s.[1997 v.s.]:gha) makes it extremely comparable to my school textbooks. The pruning found in the latter cannot therefore be attributed to further simplification for the targeted audience. For other less detailed versions of the Balbhadra story by the same author see Gyawali (1955, 1956). Two essays by Bengali authors (Basu 1895, Sen 1899) originally published in Bengali magazines have been translated by Gyawali and attached to his text (2018 v.s.[1997 v.s.]:22-54). For an account of Balbhadra and Gorkhali bravery in Hindi, see Vidyalkara (1962).
33. Dines R Pant (2022 v.s.) provides some glimpses of the service of Nepalis in the Sikh army. While one of the documents he reproduces states that the interest to join the Sikh army came from Balbhadra himself, it is silent on his reasons for doing so.
34. On Bhakti Thapa see Mahes R Pant's (2023 v.s.) essay published as a serial starting with No. 10 of Purnima.
35. For examples of the influence of Gyawali's writings on Balbhadra on two generations of Nepali students before me see Shaha (1967[1965]) and S. Onta (2023 v.s.). Shaha (1967[1965]) is a selective and revised English rendition of Gyawali's 1956 book whose first edition was published in 1949. It is interesting to note that in the preface to his book, Shaha writes, "I had to pen these pages in a rather hurried manner to satisfy the growing curiosity of my boy to learn more about our past and our national heroes. I thought that I owed it to him to do this because I had seriously neglected my responsibility for educating him in our national history. To accomplish my purpose readily, it occurred to me to render into English Shri S. B. Gyawali's book *Nepali Biraharu*, which I had myself read with great profit as a boy" (Shaha 1967[1965]:ix). Shaha (1994) has recently revisited the battle of Nalapani in the pages of a Kathmandu daily. S. Onta's essay was published in *Balaka*, a children's magazine, at a time when Gyawali was one of the members of its editorial board.
36. In a recent history of the Nepali army brought out by the Royal Nepal Army Headquarters, it is stated that since Balbhadra liked to show bravery on the battle-field, he went to Lahore to join Ranajit Singh's army after the 1814-16 war. The same source speculates that in the context of the later realization that it "was the absence of the friendship between Nepal and the Punjab that led to their defeat in the hands of the English....it might be possible that Bir Balbhadra Kunwar went to the Punjab with the intention of generating friendship between the two sides" (Sharma and Rathaur 1992:503-4). While it acknowledges that no historical evidence has been found to support this line of thinking, it neglects the fact (D. Pant 2022 v.s.) that there were Nepalis serving for Ranajit Singh prior to Balbhadra's joining. Cf. R. Sharma (1992[2017 v.s.]).
37. I hasten to emphasize that the other birs are remembered. See for instance the essay on Amarsingh in a seventh grade textbook which begins with the

- statement "Nepal's history is the history of bravery" (G. Bhattarai 2039 v.s.:48). My point here is that Balbhadra is celebrated more than anybody else.
38. Literary historians such as Dixit (2018 v.s) and Shrestha (2038 v.s) have argued that the trauma generated by Sagauli made bhakti displace bravery as the dominant motif of Nepali literature in the immediate post-war years. See R. Shrestha (2035 v.s) for a slightly different argument. See also R. Subedi (2038 v.s.:25-32).
 39. For instance, Acharyadixit repeatedly cites passages from Vansittart (1896:40-42) and Williams (1874:124-38). One of the passages he cites from Williams reads: "Such was the conclusion of the defence of Kalunga [Nalapani], a feat of arms worthy of the best days of chivalry, conducted with a heroism almost sufficient to palliate the disgrace of our own reserves" (1874:134). For one of the early British accounts of the war at Nalapani, see Frazer (1820:13-31). Pemble's more recent account of the early British reverses at Nalapani puts all the blame on Gillespie (1971:134-66). For the construction of Nalapani as a historical pilgrimage site in Nepali travel literature, see Ghising (1992) and Prem Pradhan (2052 v.s.). For other deployments of the memory of Nalapani and Balbhadra, see D. Bista (2021 v.s.), L. Devkota (2026 v.s.), Giri (1970), P. Malla (2045 v.s.), Nepali (1984), Sama (2025 v.s.), Sharma (2017 v.s.) and D. Thapa (2027 v.s.) among others. I borrow the phrase "excessively plausible" from David Ludden.
 40. I am grateful to Basanta Thapa for convincing me of the importance of the disappearance of the Gaje Ghale story from later textbooks. What I write in this section is informed by conversations I have had with him. Ganesh M. Gurung notes this disappearance as one case of discrimination against the "indigenous peoples of Nepal" (1994:140-41). He does not provide further elaboration.
 41. The authors have made a mistake here. The incident that is described took place in May 1943 and not 1945. I have thus far been unable to figure out why the compilers of Nepali Sahitya chose to include the story of Gaje Ghale in their Nepali language primer over those of the other eleven VC winners (two from World War I and nine from World War II). The fact that he met the then Rana premier Juddha Shumsher in 1944 quite by chance (Paudyal 2050 v.s.:9) and was awarded the "Prajwal Nepal Tara" medal by the latter might have something to do with it (C. Gurung 1994:57-8; 91). For details on Parasmani Pradhan's efforts in the production of Nepali language textbooks from Darjeeling see his (1969:1-7) and (2028 v.s.:94-156).
 42. A political activist and educator in the 1950s, Muktinath Timisina, writes in his autobiography that when discussions were being held to determine the name of the college that eventually opened in Pokhara in 1960, some people suggested that it be named after Gaje Ghaley. But, writes Timisina, "from the perspective of national pride, I proposed that it be named after Prithvinarayan Shah" (2040 v.s.:107). His proposal received support from others and the college was named accordingly. It is also quite significant that the first public reception of Gurkha VC awardees was held in Nepal only in 1994 (C. Gurung 1994).

43. I am grateful to Kaushik Ghosh for pushing me on this point. For examples of analyses of history textbooks used in India and Pakistan see Jalal (1995) and Powell (1996).
44. I have thus far been unable to find cumulative data for the number of students who attended grades four and five in this quarter century. Aggregate enrollment figures for all primary school grades (grades I through III before 1980 and I through V since then) are available in published sources. For instance, about 2.8 million students were enrolled in primary schools in 1990 (Central Bureau of Statistics 1992:156). On the basis of the published data, I feel comfortable in stating that at least a few million students read the textbook stories of RI during this period. Karmacharya (1985) discusses the impact of the growth in textbook production in the Nepali printing industry.
45. The quotation has been extracted from a longer private communication to me from a student who finished high school from Kathmandu in 1991.
46. See Ragsdale (1989) for a case of how the dictates of the NESP were subverted in a Gurung village in central west Nepal.
47. As an example of the rerendering of some members of the bir pantheon of RI as Magars, see P. Thapa Magar (1993). A response from some well-known academic historians to such efforts can be found in a special issue of the journal *Abhiman* (1995).
48. The almost complete absence of studies on Nepali nationalism – along the lines suggested here or otherwise – in recent collected works of studies related to Nepal (e.g. Kölver 1992, Toffin 1993, Allen 1994) is a telling evidence of how Nepal has until recently been located within the concerns of international scholarship. The contrast with India where there has been an entire industry of scholarship designed around this theme should prove to be an insightful comparative project on the politics that influence research and scholarship on Nepal.
49. Cf. Bhupi Sherchan's famous poem "Galat Lagcha Malai Mero Desko Itihas" (2051 v.s.[2026 v.s.]:25-27). One translation of this poem can be found in Hutt (1991:124-25).

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VISIBLE AND INVISIBLE ASPECTS OF THE DEVĪ DANCES IN SANKHU, NEPAL

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Introduction

Several places in the Valley of Kathmandu can boast masked dances in which the goddess (Devī) defeats her demon adversary Daitya. The yearly Devī pyākhaṃ (dance) in the capital Kathmandu is performed during Indra yātrā (Toffin 1992:77), the eight days festival of the king of the gods. A salient feature of the performances is that Daitya goes about unmasked, as if he stands somewhat closer to human beings than the masked goddess who slays him, or rather, who subdues him. For it is denied that Daitya is to be killed in the drama; at a more hidden level animosity goes together with affinity between the two opposed sides.

An invisible but all the more salient feature of the Devī pyākhaṃ in the small town of Sankhu (in the north-eastern corner of Kathmandu Valley) is that Daitya is not staged at all, in spite of the fact that his defeat is commemorated in the accompanying songs and enacted by the three protagonists brandishing their swords. The story goes that when the Devī pyākhaṃ of Sankhu was invited to the court of Kathmandu it was ridiculed because the protagonists Devī, Caṇḍī and Bhairava had no real antagonist. However, when Devī stroke her sword in a stone to mark the slaying of Daitya, her force was so strong that the Daitya performer of Kathmandu's Devī dance died at the instant, without even being touched. The Devī pyākhaṃ of Sankhu has not been invited to the capital ever since.

If invited by a benefactor, the Sankhu Devī Dances can be performed any time between Kāyāṣṭmī (four days before the start of Indra yātrā) and Vijayā Daśami, the last day of the Daśain festival. After that it can not be performed until Svanti (the festival of light known in Nepālī as Tihār). Furthermore, it is prohibited to perform the dance at the time of Sankhu Vajrayoginī yātrā, the town's main festival. The prohibition lasts from the very start, the invitation of the goddess (*nimantraṇā*), till the very end, the farewell worship (*bicā pūjā*). The prohibitions are mentioned in the

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instruction text of Vajrācārya, but no further explanation is given about the reason why. The dance association members do not know about the prohibition, so they said that the dance can be performed throughout the year. Vajrayoginī is the main goddess of Sankhu, and her shrine is situated on the hill above the town. Zanen has given a detailed description of the Vajrayoginī festival and Sankhu town (1986:125-166). At all other times of the year it is not forbidden to perform the Devī dance. In the absence of any patrons or sponsors, as it has now been for many years, the Devī Pyākham is yearly performed in the night of Kāyāṣṭmī in September. While the spectacle itself has thus been reduced to only one night in a year, the ritual and social organisation that surround the dances and constitute the foundation of their divine nature remain relatively untouched; the complexity of the invisible domain by far surpasses its highlight, the spectacular shows itself.

Ritual preparation and elaboration are features not confined to the Devī Pyākham of Sankhu. All divine dances of the valley start with the worship of Nāsadyo, the god of music, dance and drama. The Sankhu Devī dances derive their ritual complexity from their multi-caste participation, the elaborate ceremonies (in principle once every five years) at the time of the instruction and inauguration of a new dancing team, and the diversification of functions pertaining to different aspects of the performance. There are *nāyos* (elders, teachers) for all the different elements in the Pyākham: the movements and gestures of the dancers (Devī *nāyo*), the ritual observances required (*mū nāyo*), the rhythms of the drums (*khim nāyo*), the accompanying songs (*me nāyo*) and the beatings of the cymbals (*tāḥ nāyo*).

A Buddhist (Vajrācārya) *guruju* officiates at the moments of transition: the worship and sacrifice to Nāsadyo preceding every dance, the acquirement of wings from the crown of the town's principle goddess Vajrayoginī—to be (temporarily) attached to the crowns of the dancers, and finally, putting as well as removing spells that give power to the divine dancers and protect them from the evil eye. A major transition is the sanctification of a new group of dancers which requires several *pūjās* to Vajrayoginī and Nāsadyo; the transfer (“drawing”) of the latter (the god of music and dance) to the house of instruction; (*ākḥāḥ chem*); and, at the conclusion of the instruction period, three nights on end in which the dancers come out and circumambulate the town.

The mystery and power of the divine dances is contained in all those ritual aspects which overshadow the dramatic performance and at the same time represent a more hidden level of meaning in Sankhu's Devī Pyākham.

History and Myth

Nepal, as present day Kathmandu Valley was once called, is a centre of art and architecture, dance and drama, religion and culture. This was especially so in the time of Malla rule, from the 14th to 17th centuries. Several Malla kings themselves not only wrote songs, poetry and drama, but also staged dance and drama and played different roles (characters) themselves (see Malla 1982:66, 65-76; Vaidya and Kamsākār 1991:10, ix; Iltis 1990:146; Vajrācārya 1990:40-44). In the 14th century Gopālarājavaṃśāvalī, the oldest written chronicle of Nepāl, the Newari word for dance and drama, *pyākhaṃ*, is mentioned in many places (Vajrācārya and Malla 1985: 148, 159, 162-164), which shows the rich tradition of dance and drama in those days. In Newari the word, *pyākhaṃ* is used for both dance and drama. But the tradition of *pyākhaṃ* which is based on the stories of gods and goddesses consists mostly of dance and ballads. The Devī *pyākhaṃ* of Kathmandu and the Devī *pyākhaṃ* of Sankhu were developed in that tradition. It is difficult to say when exactly the Devī *pyākhaṃ* in Sankhu started, because there is no written document available to trace the history, except two small manuscripts, one of which was copied in 1856 and the other in 1863. The first one contains ritual instructions for the Vajrācārya priest and the second contains hymns which are sung in the dance. The dance training is carried out by the assembly of organisers, the *guthi* of the Devī dance. It is done orally, no text of instruction is used. The tradition has been continued by the *guthi* members since their forefathers' times, as told by the dance teacher Mr. Hirakaji Shrestha.

Worshipping the mother goddess is an old tradition in Hindu society. Sankhu Devī *pyākhaṃ* is fully based on songs of praise to the goddess Devī in the powerful forms of Kālikā, Durgā, Bhavānī and Bhagavatī. For the people of Sankhu it is Vajrayoginī *hyāumkhvāḥmāju* (red-faced mother) or *mhāsukhvāḥmāju* (yellow-faced mother) who may have the forms of Kālikā, Durgā, Bhavānī, Bhagavatī or Devī. Red-faced mother is the main statue of Vajrayoginī, which never comes out of the temple, but the yellow-faced one is the *yātrā mūrti* of Vajrayoginī, which is carried down to Sankhu town every year in March/April in the Vajrayoginī festival. Both are called Vajrayoginī, but iconographically the two are quite different. Originally she was a goddess of the Buddhists, but now she is worshipped by Hindus as well. In his book *History of Nepal*, Daniel Wright has indicated the Hinduisation of the goddess Vajrayoginī (Wright 1877:35). For the people of Sankhu, Devī *Pyākhaṃ* is nothing else than the dance of Vajrayoginī herself in the form of three dancers: Devī, Caṇḍī and Bhairava.

The song teacher, called me *nāyo* (song leader) in the dance assembly, Mr. Krishna Shrestha, said that long, long ago a great tantrist found the

goddess Vajrayoginī dancing in a courtyard in Calākhu quarter of Sankhu, disguising herself as three children. As the tantrist was certain that the dancing children were none other than the goddess Vajrayoginī, he bound them with his magic spells (*tāṃ taye*) and swore to perform her dance every year in Sankhu. Since that time the Devī Dance of Sankhu is performed in Sankhu.

According to the *mū nāyo* (the chief or the main leader of the dance assembly), Devī Vajrayoginī is fierce as well as tender and merciful. If she is made angry she can bring great destruction, and if she is pleased she can bestow life and happiness. Masks, ornaments, dresses of Devī dancers, and musical instruments are kept in the *mū nāyo*'s house. Every evening his wife has to light a wick in that room. Sometimes when she forgot to do so, she had to face fearful dreams or heard a frightening sound of jingling bracelets of Devī from the storeroom.

One of the *khim* (two-sided drum) players Mr. Kedar Narayan Ranjit said that many years ago, when he was very young, the Devī dance was not performed for a year. In that particular year a flock of monkeys from Vajrayoginī forest kept hanging around Sankhu town to alarm the dance assembly to perform the dance soon. Later, when the dance was performed, they suddenly disappeared. He told that just a few years back too, when it was becoming late to train the present team of dancers, his wife and his neighbours saw the three dancers dancing on the roof of the *mū nāyo*'s house. He said that this also was to alarm the dance assembly not to delay the training of new dancers.

In relation to the divine power of Devī, almost all guthi members whom we interviewed also repeated the story of the instant death of a Daitya dancer of the Kathmandu Devī pyākham team when the Sankhu team visited the Kathmandu court.

When we go through the Hindu myth of Devī, we encounter numerous names for her such as Durgā, Kālī, Cāmuṇḍā, Mahiṣāsura Mardini, "The slayer of the buffalo demon," and Umā or Pārvatī, as the wife of Siva (see Hopkins 1971:126; O'Flaherty 1975:238-269; Wilkins 1882:285-320). The accompanying songs in the Sankhu Devī pyākham are all descriptions of the various forms of the goddess Kālī, praising the slaying of various demon enemies.

Songs and Music

In the instruction text of the Vajrācārya priest, it is clearly stated that no other songs than *mālaśrī* (a kind of tune which is sung around Daśain festival in the praise of Kālī) can be used in the Devī pyākham. In his book *Songs of Nepāl*, Siegfried Lienhard has collected one such song

(1974:131). In Sankhu Devī pyākhaṃ eighteen such songs are sung to accompany the dances. In all songs, except the last one, Devī, Kālī, Bhagavatī is praised in her different names, forms, and actions of killing various demon opponents. Her beauty and wearing of different ornaments are also described in those songs. She is praised as the queen of the three worlds. In one of the songs the nature of Vajrayoginī in her fierce form is described ultimately as Kālī. Only in the last song, which is called *ārati* (the song which is sung at the end or at the beginning of singing), are many other Hindu deities mentioned.

The three dancers—Devī, Caṇḍī, and Bhairava—dance in the same songs and perform the same movements. There is no sequence in the dances and songs in Sankhu Devī pyākhaṃ, unlike in the Kathmandu Devī pyākhaṃ, where dances are presented one after another in their sequence.

Beside the three divine dancers, three more dancers—Khyāḥ (a furry creature), Kavaṃ (a skeleton) and Betā (a gentle kind of demon)—perform dances in Devī pyākhaṃ. Their dances are presented to entertain the public. In Kathmandu Devī pyākhaṃ their dances fit into the sequence in which the divine dancers Devī (who is also called Kumārī in Kathmandu), Caṇḍī and Bhairava are the main characters. Sometimes they dance together, but in Sankhu Khyāḥ, Kavaṃ and Betā are (somehow) separated from the divine dances. They (can) perform humorous dance sketches in between the divine dances without any sequence. Separately six songs are sung in performing Khyāḥ pyākhaṃ in Sankhu Devī Dance.

To accompany those songs, *khiṃ*, *dhāḥ*, and *nāykhim* (different kinds of two headed drums), *tāḥ*, *chusyāḥ*, *babhū* (different kinds of cymbals), and *mvahāli* (a kind of pipe to blow music) are played. These instruments are played depending upon the songs.

In the Kathmandu Devī dance, all together ten episodes of dances are performed, including the *dyolhāyegu* (music or melody devoted to pay respect to the shrines of local gods/goddesses).

Masks, Dresses, and Ornaments

Devī, Caṇḍī, and Bhairava's masks in Sankhu are made of papier-mâché by local Citrakār, a painter caste in the Newar society. Once made, it is unnecessary to change the masks until they are broken. But every year a Citrakār should repaint the masks, a tradition which also stopped a few years ago. The guthi no longer received money to remunerate to the Citrakār. The guthi's main leader said that the masks would now be given for painting only if their colour fades away. Devī's and Caṇḍī's masks are almost similar and red in colour, while Bhairava's mask is black. Only these masks are used in public performances. In addition to these, there are

three copper masks that are very secret and used only in the training period of new dances.

Devī and Caṇḍī wear a red blouse and red jāmā (a long skirt), and Bhairava wears a black blouse and black jāmā. The dancers wear various ornaments too. On their head they wear a matu (a divine crown), to which silver wings are attached (New.: kikiṃpā), and around their necks they wear various metal necklaces. They wear several decorated bracelets around their arms. They also wear anklets below their knees which give a jingling sound when they dance.

The Guthi Composition

The Newar society is strong associated with various *guthis* (associations). But unlike Sī guthi and Sanā guthi (funeral associations), other religious associations are not always caste-bound. Sankhu's Devī pyākhaṃ guthi falls into the second category. Previously this guthi consisted of only nine members, and others were not considered guthi members, but nowadays the pattern of the *guthi* has changed considerably. Many people of Calākhu quarter from different castes are considered to be members of the guthi. Yet, the organising responsibility is taken by the five nāyo's, the leaders of the guthi, who all belong to the Shrestha caste. But in singing songs and playing instruments, several other castes are included in the association. According to the present *khim nāyo*, Mr. Shyam Krishna Shrestha, those who bring a plate with worshipping materials for Nāsadyo in the morning of Kāyāṣṭmī (the dance performing day) are considered the members of the association. The Jyāpu (farmer caste) who sing songs and play instruments, the Jogi who play *mvahālī* (a kind of pipe), the Nau (the barber) who cuts toe nails and shaves heads of the dancers, and the Puṃ or Citrakār who paints masks all bring *pūjā* (a plate with worshipping materials) in that morning. All are considered guthi members of the Devī pyākhaṃ. Generally impure castes like the Jogī are never considered guthi members in other cases. In Sankhu Devī pyākhaṃ it is a unique example.

The distribution of sī (parts of the head of the sacrificed animal) is one of the essential elements of Newar feasts in which an animal is sacrificed to any god or goddess, either inside a family or in an association. In the Devī dance association every year in the dance performing day a goat is sacrificed, and later in the evening its head is divided into eight parts as *sī* (parts of the head of the sacrifice). In the instructional text of the Vajrācārya priest it is said to give the main *sī* — the right eye — to the dance teacher (Devī nāyo), but in practice it is given to the *mū nāyo*, the main leader of the guthi. The left eye is given to the Bhairava dancer, the right ear to the Devī dancer, the left ear to the Caṇḍī dancer, the tongue to the Devī nāyo,

the right jaw to the me nāyo (song teacher), left jaw to the khiṃ nāyo and the nose to the Vajrācārya priest who officiates at all the ritual proceedings in the Devī pyākhaṃ.

Selection of New Dancers

In principle every five years new dancers must be introduced, but in practice it never happened, as far as the Devī dance teacher remembers. Only once in twelve or fifteen years new dancers are trained. This is due to financial problems. Training a new team of dancers is expensive, and there are no means to meet the costs except from among the guthi members themselves, who must share in the expenses. So in selecting new dancers mostly young boys are chosen, so they can continue to dance for many years. In addition the main leader of the dance says young boys are obedient and reliable and quick in learning to dance, and as dance characters youngsters look more beautiful and attractive. Surprisingly enough, in none of the divine dances of the Kathmandu valley including Sankhu's Devī dance girls are recruited as dance characters, even though the female deities are pre-eminent.

In case of the Khyāḥ, Kavaṃ and Betā there is no caste boundary, but for the Bhairava, Devī and Caṇḍī dancers, one must be of Shrestha caste. New dancers are preferably chosen from among those families in whom old dancers came. If the dancers are not found from those families, opportunity is given to boys of the other members of the Devī dance association. Only if eligible boys are not found among the association members, then boys from outside the association are invited, but still not from outside Sankhu town. The dancers in Sankhu's Devī dance are paid not a single penny, neither by government authorities nor by the dance association. However, there are not the risks and obligations faced as for example in the Kathmandu Daitya and Kumār dancers. In the latter case failure to fulfil the rules and regulations can make the dancers suffer badly (Van den Hoek and Shrestha 1992:196).

Training of new dances requires that an astrologer approve the boys. Horoscopes of the dancers to be trained are given to the astrologer for study. If he does not approve someone's horoscope, that person cannot be selected to dance. Five years ago, when the present batch of dancers was about to start training, one boy was disapproved by the astrologer. According to the mū nāyo, the main leader, this rule is very strict in case of Bhairava and Devī dancers, but less strict in case of the Caṇḍī dancer. As the main leader remembers, long ago when he was very young a boy was made Devī dancer ignoring the astrologer's disapproval, and the boy died after his

first year's performances. So he thinks it is difficult to be a dancer in Sankhu's Devī dance.

The present Devī dancer is the main leader's son. He was only ten when he was chosen for the dance. He said he never felt possessed by the deity during his dance, but he has to keep shivering as if possessed. He said he has to do so because he was taught so. When the dancers are dressed and masked local people worship them as divinities, but nowadays such respect is only due in the single night when they perform the dance.

The Sankhu Devī dancers are not very proud of their divine roles, as the former Devī dancer (who is presently *khim nāyo*) in the Sankhu Devī dance said. They had to perform the dance continuously for fifteen years, which was altogether tedious.

Training of the Dancers

During the training, the new dancers must pass four phases:

1. The transfer of Nāsadyo (the god of dance and music) to the house of instruction and the beginning of dance training
2. Bā pūjā: second sacrificial worship at the Nāsadyo Shrine when the dancers are about half-way in exercising the dance actions
3. Sila taye khākegu pūjā: another sacrificial worship in the Nāsadyo shrine, to begin the dancers shivering
4. Pidanigu: the first performances of the dancers for three days continuously

1. *The transfer of Nāsadyo.* This day is also fixed by an astrologer. In this day a secret night worship is done in a local Nāsadyo shrine located in Dhūmlā tvāḥ (quarter). This time the worship of Nāsadyo is done with a goat sacrifice.

To start the worship each dancer has to offer ten betal nuts (gvay) and a coin (*dām*) to Nāsadyo. This process is called *gvay dām tayegu*. For the Newars (of Nepal) the *gvay dām tayegu* is a ritual announcement of a later larger ceremony (Tuladhar 1979/80:47). Then the Vajrācārya priest starts worshipping Nāsadyo and prepares mohanī (soot collected from oil lamp). This mohanī is of great importance for the trainees, because from this day on they must mark it on their foreheads everyday before practising their dance, until a day before their first public performance. They are prohibited from taking any mohanī from elsewhere till the day of their first performance (*pidanigu*), and they need not mourn if anybody dies in their family in that period.

After worship and sacrifice they go back to the house where the training of the dancers takes place (*ākhāḥ chem*). Nowadays it is in the *mū nāyo*'s

house where all the things relating to the Devī pyākhaṃ are kept. The priest has to purify the earth in the training room immediately after the dancers arrive there. He also has to bind 21 grains of husked rice (*ākhe*) four times in four small pieces of cloth to place those in the four directions of the room. Finally he has to put imaginary fences for protection against evil spirits in all four directions of the room. Then all dancer boys must present ten betal nuts and a coin (*dām*) to the Devī nāyo, the dance teacher, and they have to bow down before him and request him to teach them the dance well. Then they begin the dance practice holding a wooden sword in their hands but without any masks or special dresses.

There is no *nāsah kāpah* (a cloth painted sign of Nāsadyo) used in Sankhu for transferring Nāsadyo. This is frequently used in Kathmandu, such as in case of the Daitya and Kumār dance and other divine dances. The Vajrācārya priest said that to transfer Nāsadyo he has to bind in a piece of cloth three kisli which are offered to Nāsadyo by the dancers and contain betal nuts and coins. Those are taken to the training room where they are put in a niche. The priest did not mention any *kalaśa* (earthen pot), but the house holder, the mūnayo, said that only one kisli is put on the mouth of a *kalaśa* which they call Nāsadyo. It is brought home after having received worship at the Nāsadyo shrine to be put in a wall niche in the training room. As the training finishes, the *kalaśa* remains in his home but without having any importance. When the training is completed, the kisli on top of the *kalaśa* is brought to the Vajrācārya priest.

According to the dance teacher, in the first period of training the dancers are taught to grasp the drum beatings. In this period the beatings are taught orally only. As soon as they have learned the beatings, the date for Bā pūjā is fixed.

2. *Bā pūjā*. This pūjā is also done secretly in the night-time in the local Nāsadyo shrine with a goat sacrifice. Then the dancers return to the *mūn\o(,a)yo*'s home, and after a feast, the training resumes. From now on the *khim* drum is introduced in dance training and the dancers have to practice on the beatings of the *khim*.

One common phenomenon among different castes of the Newar community is their belief that, to please Nāsadyo and to learn dance and music sooner, they need to steal animals. This belief is still found in the Sankhu Devī dance group. If a dancer is unable to steal any animal in the time of training, he becomes very slow in learning things; if a dancer is able to steal an animal, he will become a graceful dancer, singer or instrument player and be successful in whatever art he is learning. In the course of training the trainees can steal any animals for sacrifice, no matter

whether they are male or female animals; they can sacrifice to Nāsadyo in the *ākhāḥ* (training room) indiscriminately, even including pregnant animals. Only male animals are sacrificed in other cases. Sī are also distributed from those stolen animals, but no meat is allowed to be brought out from the training room. Even the women in the household are not supposed to eat any meat from those animals. However, the present *khim nāyo*, who once was a Devī dancer, said that he never did the stealing work. Yet his batch learned the dance in a month, which is a very short period to learn this dance. In the training time his other friends did steal animals from which he said he ate his share.

3. *Sila taye khākegu pūjā or shivering of the dancers.* In the ritual instruction text of the Vajrācārya priest, it is said that this pūjā should be done 21 days before the first performance of the new dancers. Again a goat is sacrificed in the Nāsadyo shrine. This time the copper masks, iron swords, *ghamghalā* (anklet with string of small bells) and *pātra* (bowls) of the dancers also receive worship together with Nāsadyo. The priest has to blow spells (of shivering) on all those attributes of the dancers, and he has to dry them in the smoke of *gumgū*, a kind of incense. Then he has to hand over the masks, ankle bracelets, swords and bowls to the dancers.

If possible the priest has to make the dancers shiver (*khākegu*) one by one, blowing spells 21 times to each of them. Whether they shiver or not they continue to practice every day. Within seven days, the dancers shiver automatically. In case they fail to shiver within seven days, they have to do a small worship to Nāsadyo with *samaybaji*, which contains beaten rice, black soyabeans, ginger, burned meat and liquor (Juju and Shrestha 1985:13) and a sacrifice of a duck's egg. Together with those worshipping items they must take 21 *dāphvaḥ svām* (a kind of scentless white jasmine but in the ritual replaceable by a silver imitation) to the Nāsadyo shrine. First they are to offer those to Nāsadyo and bring back home nine of them. In the home (in the training room) the priest should attach three *dāphvaḥ svām* to each one's head and try to make them shiver. If things still do not improve with similar rituals and pūjā, the instruction is to take twenty-one grains of husked rice (*ākhe*) to Nāsadyo and after pūjā bring back nine grains and then attach three grains on each dancer's head. It is said in the instruction text that this time the dancers shiver without doubt.

The process of making the dancers shiver is one of the most important features in the Sankhu Devī dance by which the audience recognizes them as possessed by the divinities. When the dancers come out they are distinct from human beings not only because of their masks and dresses but also because they keep shivering, which local people think is a sign of their divine power.

4. *Pidanigu or the first performances of the dancers.* After the dancers learn the dancing perfectly, pidanigu day is confirmed. This day the guthi must perform the *pañcabali pūjā* (worship with five animals' sacrifice: a buffalo, goat, ram, duck and cock) at the local Nāsadyo shrine. The assembly must also do pūjā at the local Gaṇesa as well as at the Vajrayoginī shrine and at Mahākāla below the Vajrayoginī temple. In the text they are instructed to make a goat sacrifice at Mahākāla too. Mahākāla is also called Bhairava and well known by those names only, but in the *pitha pūjā* vidhi text the shrine is called Mahālakṣmī. Vajrayoginī does not accept blood in her temple, but animals to be sacrificed in Mahākāla are consecrated in her name, sometimes in front of the main gate of her temple (mostly by non-Newar people from outside Sankhu). But sacrifices are done only at the Mahākāla shrine. The *pañcabali pūjā* at Nāsadyo shrine is done sometime in the morning. Mohanī is to be made, and masks, ankle bracelets, swords and pātra need to be set up for worship. Furthermore all musical instruments are set up for receiving worship together with Nāsadyo. Three *thāpim* (items for worship, mostly a pot containing liquor) are also put there to be handed over to the three dancers later.

Concluding the worship flowers are taken from the god Nāsadyo, and the masks, ankle bracelets, swords and bowls are handed over to the dancers together with the flowers. They take them into the training house.

After the *sikābhvay* (a feast at which the parts of sacrificial animals' heads are distributed) in the evening the dancers are made ready to go out for their first public performance. Before they go out the priest has to blow the spells to make the dancers shiver, and he has to put a fence against evil spirits around them.

The Devī dancers in Sankhu have to perform their first dance at Dhumlā dabū (stage), because the stage is supposed to be the stage of Vajrayoginī and the dance itself is believed to be her dance. Then they return to Calākhū quarter and begin their dance, in front of Ajimādyo who is believed to be the mother of Vajrayoginī. After that they present dances at the Calākhū stage and take a round of the town presenting dances in all the quarters and stages. After presenting dances for three nights continuously, the pidanigu ceremony ends. After pidanigu (ceremony) there is rest for them until Kāyāṣṭmī.

Every year in the Kāyāṣṭmī night the dancers march around Sankhu town performing dances in all the eight quarters. In other years they start their dance from Calākhū quarter in front of Ajimādyo. In going around the town the dancers have to dance in *dyolhāyegu* gesture in front of all the divinities on the route. As the *khim nāyo* said, they have to perform *dyolhāyegu* dance more than a hundred times in making a round of the town. But it is a short act with each time a repetition of the same movements.

During the training period Vajrayoginī is worshipped simultaneously with Nāsadyo. On the day of the Kāyāṣṭmī dance performance, three pieces of Kikimpā, wings from the crown of Vajrayoginī, are brought to be attached on each dancer's crown. The bringing of the wings and attaching of the wings is done by a Vajrācārya priest. The attachment of wings is also considered to transfer the divine power of Vajrayoginī to the dancers.

Conclusion

The Devī dancers are praised in many ways for killing demon antagonists, but surprisingly none of the demon characters are staged in the dance performances in Sankhu. The dance association members said it is because her divine power can really kill the demon character if one is staged.

The reason why the fight with the demon is kept invisible remains mysterious. But when you take into account the fear and superstition among the local people, it is not difficult to imagine that the demon character is excluded to avoid the unfortunate death of the performer.

In Kathmandu's Devī dance the demon is slain by Devī, as Bhairava was unable to kill him. But Caṇḍī has nothing to do with the slaying of the demon. In case of the Sankhu Devī dance, all three dancers dance with the same songs, on the same musical beat and with the same movements. All of them strike their swords at the ground as a gesture of killing demons.

Unlike in mother goddesses (Mātrkā) temples in the valley, where fierce forms of Devī and Kālī are invoked and animals are sacrificed, blood is totally forbidden in the temple of Vajrayoginī. Only in the secret night worshippings Vajrayoginī accepts cooked meat and cooked duck eggs from the hands of Vajrācārya priests. The manifestation in the Devī dance of Sankhu of Vajrayoginī, who is none other than Kālī or Durgā as the accompanying songs describe, might also be seen as part of a process of Hinduisation of Vajrayoginī.

In contrast with other divine dances of the valley where sacrificing animals and drinking of the blood by the masked dancers is a common feature, it is not so in the case of the Devī dances in Sankhu. In the time of performing dances, the actors are not supposed to kill any animals or drink blood. Only in worshipping Nāsadyo they sacrifice animals. Doing several worships and sacrifices in Nāsadyo, the dancers get their divine power and are called Devī, Caṇḍī and Bhairava. But their power does not come from those deities but from Nāsadyo.

In the other dances of the valley, whether the Daitya and Kumār dances in Kathmandu or the Navadurgā dance of Bhaktapur and other divine dances, their sources of power and divinity are always drawn from Nāsadyo.

Nāsadyo, the god of music and dance, embodies the power to transmit divine power from the divinities into the human actors. The female characters may be considered the most powerful, slaying as they do the demon enemy. But in the practice of dance performances, the indigenous Newar god Nāsadyo transfers divine power into both male and female characters. The agency to bring this transfer about is, as we have seen, the bringing of sacrifice before the dance and during the training of the dancers.

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A NOTE ON THE HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE OF VAJRAYOGINI OF SĀKHU

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Sākhu, an ancient Newar town located in the east of the Kathmandu valley, stretches north to south on the foothills of Manichuda. Sākhu has long preserved its architectural and cultural heritage, thus, occupying a prominent status in economic and religious fields. As an important location of regular cultural and religious activities, it has served a *cause celebre*. This article tries to analyse the historical activities that have endured in distinct characters reflecting historical and cultural values.

The Name 'Sākhu'

Sākhu is known by several names. 'Sakva' and 'Sākhu' are used in the Newari and Nepali languages respectably. It is also known as 'Gūbāhā' that signifies the 'Vihara of the hill' or 'nine Viharas'. However, Gūbāhā is basically attributed to Vajrayogini, a deity's temple lying on the hill closeby. The following arguments exist for the name of the place.

1. Some narrate the name 'Sakva' that also means the 'crow' (in Newari) of hilly regions as it is considered the habitat of the crow.
2. It is also considered that 'Sākhu' in Nepali is the corrupt form of 'Saṅkha' or conch, as the town is believed to be in conch shape. It is also said that when Sankara Deva ruled over the area, the name of the town was called 'Saṅkarāpura' or 'Saṅkarāpurē' in Sanskrit writings.
3. The old site of Vajaryogini is still been said 'Gūbāhā'. The word 'Gūn' implies ambiguous meaning such as 'hill' and 'nine' respectively in Newari language. The late Dhanavajra Vajracharya defined it as the 'bāhā' or Vihāra of the hill or jungle side. However, there is also a strong belief that because of the nine Viharas in this area, it is also named as 'Gūbāhā'.

which corresponds to this region. Subsequently the shortened name 'Sakva' came to be used for Sākhu in Newari. In the earlier art of the fifth century A.D., Vajrayogini of Sākhu was indeed represented as 'Gūvihār', a popular residential place for the Buddhist monks on the sloppy hills of Manichuda. The Gopal Vamsavali, a chronicle of fourteenth century, described the names like 'Saṅkosa' and 'Saṅkha' for Sākhu, while in the Malla period some inscriptions offer words like 'Sakva' and 'Sankarapure' for this place.

The Builder of Sākhu Town

According to the legends of Nepal, King Sankar Deva of the early medieval period was the actual founder of the Sākhu town, Although we cannot trace the name of Sankara Deva in the inscriptions and coins. According to the Vamsavali and colophones, the king Sankara Deva ruled over the area. But, three Sankara Deva names are enumerated in different documents covering from the later Lichhavi to the medieval period as the prominent ruler of the Kathmandu Valley. The Gopal Vamsavali narrates that Sankara Deva had ruled the valley after Vardhaman Deva, while the chronicle collected by Wright and Kirkpatrick has mentioned Bala Deva as his predecessor. Wright Vamsavali further describes that Sankara Deva was the actual founder of Sankhu town (Wright 1993:153); however, this account is not found in other Vamsavali, nor has it been proven yet in archaeological sources.

It is also notable that in the earlier medieval period the literary records mention the names Sankara Deva in the Lichhavi and Thkuris dynasties. And in Thakuri dynasty two Sankara Deva names are found, one after Raghava Deva and another after Nagarjuna Deva (but the Gopal Vamsavali mentioned the name Vardhamana Deva in the place of Raghava Deva). Petech has mentioned that the first Sankara Deva had ruled over here after Raghava Deva in 63-82 N.S. (i.e. 943-962 A.D.) and second in 189-202 N.S. (1069-1082 A.D.) (Petech 1984:31-46). Regmi has put the chronological date to Sankara Deva in 40-60 N.S., immediately after Jaya Deva (Regmi 1965:112). Sankara Deva, who Wright mentioned as the builder of Sankhu, appears to have reigned at the beginning of the Nepal Sambat. He is also perhaps the first who is equally described by different vamsavalies as the ruler of the early medieval period. The vamsavali to Wright's collection also narrated that at the time of Bara Deva the orthodox Hindu ideology penetrated into the northern region with a group of orthodox Brahmins (Wright 1993:152). As a consequence, Hindu influences had taken their place over Buddhist ideology, and it had created a new ground for the idea of *tantrik* contemplation, regarding the emanation of various gods and goddesses. Thus, since the early medieval period Buddhist traditional religion was embedded in the perennially

changing stages by replacing the new Buddhist deities on the one hand and through the influence of the Hindu religion approaches on them on the other. In this regard, Sankhu had taken a vital role in expanding the new ideology of Buddhism in the northern region.

Sākhū as an ancient Buddhist Centre

On the steep hills of Manichuda there existed a Buddhist Vihara prior to the temple of Vajrayogini. Although there is a lack of inscriptional evidence, many Vamsavalies and colophones support this fact without doubt. One colophone in the possession of Chandraman Joshi reads '*Sambat 80l magha krishna pratipada maghā nachhatra sōma bara thwo kunhu sri 3 Gunbihara Vajrayogini*' (Vajracharya 2022:9). It strongly supports that Vajrayogini was also called by the name of 'Gūvihār'. Dhanavajra Vajracharya, a prominent historian says the word 'Gū' is originally derived from the Kirāti language meaning 'hill with jungle' (Vajracharya 2028 (v.S.):23). Moreover, the word 'Gū' also mean 'nine' in Newari numbers. The given word is being use in both ways. The above cited information and fragments of the structure lying in the vicinity of the Vajrayogini temple as well, support its existance back to the Kirat period. On the western side of the present temple of Vajrayogini, there are several rock-cut caves which visualised the ancient shelter for the Buddhist monks, more commonly, used at the time of *Barshavyash* or could be the religious practicing places for the initiation of the boy into monkhood. One of the caves is carved in a huge stone 1.80 meters high and having two rooms of 1.81x2.18 and 1.5x1.65 metre size respectably. These must be the dwelling place for the meditating person.

This evidence suggests that Sākhū has been an important Buddhist centre from the time of the advancement of Buddhism in Nepal. The rock-cut viharas are found in various places of India. Many such caves were built around 200 B.C. to 200 A.D. (Snellgrove 1957:43). In the context of Buddhist monumental history of India, the earlier caves were presumbly used by monks for four months a year (1957:42). The rock-cut caves of Sākhū presumbly indicate the residence of Hinyani monks at the time of the beginning of Christain era. Some ancient types of small Chaityas which are lying about the ground on the eastern edge of Vajrayogini, exhibit the ancient structural fragments of viharas. In the same manner the Gopal Vamsavali narrates that when King Mana Deva I chopped his father's head unknowingly, he expressed deep regret and underwent austere penance in Gū vihara. The words of Vamsavali '*tatradhyo bahutara viharasthan*' (Vajracharya and Malla 1985:28-29) denote that there were many such viharas before the time of Mana Deve I. According to Manishaila Mahābadān there was an ancient vihara named "Padmamāla" on the hills of Manichuda

(Vajracharya 1082 (N.S.):29). Its name could have been used synonymously to the Gūvihara as mentioned in Sanskrit, for there is a tradition of giving Sanskrit names to various viharas, thus suggesting its previous existance. The construction of the various viharas as undertaken when the Māhāsaṅgika tenet in Buddhism was popular in this area. In the eighth century A.D. Padmasambhava, one of the popular spiritual teachers of Buddhist *tantra*, also visited Sākhu and stayed in the cave with his *mudra* (consort) (Gyawali 2019 (V.S.):251). Padmasambhava is still regarded as Guru Rimpoche in Tibet. Consequently, Sākhu was regarded as the important educational centre and got popularity at that time in the advancement of Buddhism. Many such Viharas built in different corners of Sākhu town visualised the regular support of the people in the development of Buddhism. Manishaila Mahābadan, however, described nine Viharas as having been built in Sākhu town. Not a single Vihar remains now, except for their locality names being used by local people along with the Buddhist devotees who pay solemn offerings in the full moon day of Srawan month every year.

Manishaila Mahābadān narrated that there were Siddikula Māhāvihara (Thathu Bāhā) in Dhunla Tol, Vajrachakra Māhāvihara (Opi Bāhā) in Salkha Tol, Gyan Chakra Māhāvihara (Yam Bahi) in Durgahiti Tol, Dharmadhatu Māhāvihar (Sui Bāhā) in Dathunani, Gunākar Māhāvihar (Ko Bāhā) in Sun Tol, Jayanakar Māhāvihara (Mansu Bāhā) in Chalaku tol, Dharmachakra Māhāvihara (Om Bāhā) In Durgāhiti and Henākar Māhāvihar (Duchen Bāhā) in Dathu Chok. Some writers also narrated the name of Padmagiri Dharmadhātu Māhāvihara to Yogeswore Bāhā and Kirtipunya to Gūvihara (Vajracharya 2039 (V.S.):65). In this regard, the writers have listed Padmagiri and Kirtipuny names in a single number stating both Viharas were built side by side on the present temple complex of Vajrayogini. This information is based on legendary sources, however, Padmagiri seems closer to Padmamāla to whom the text described as an ancient Viharas located on the Manishaila hills. Among many Viharas cited above, Hēnākar, Gūnākar, Kirtipunya and Dharmachakra Māhāviharas had also been built in Kathmandu by the same name in the earlier phases of the medieval period (Gyawali 2019 (V.S.):284). Similarly, in 954 (V.S.) the text entitled 'Lokesworā Satakayā Tikā' written by Ratnānanda Bajracharya of Dharmadhatu Māhāvihara, Sākhu, signifies its existance in the early medieval period (Vir Library 2021:21). In this context, Padmagiri Dharmadhatu Mahavihara is perhaps indicated to Gūvihara. At that time it was quite common that various viharas and their sub-branches were established in official and private capacity (Lock 1985:17).

Thus, from Gūvihara nine Viharas were developed at various historical junctures. And Gūvihara had acquired an oldest and significant status from

long since. In the first half of the tenth century A.D. the Buddhist religion undergone a slow change into the *tantra* and *mantra* doctrine. As a result, many Buddhist viharas received renown as important centres for *tantrik* education. Many scholars at that time come and stayed in many such viharas of Kathmandu Valley. They also visited Tibet as a religious mission.

Gūvihar of Sākhu was popular from earlier stages of Buddhist religion. Gellner opined that in the monasteries of Nepal some of the practices have descended from that of the Buddhist Hinayana doctrine (Gellner 1993:221). In this same manner Guñvihar of Sākhu has many special traditions reflecting the ancient *thērabāda* Buddhist tradition. The serving priest of Vajrayogini, who functions on rotational basis now, must renounce his family and home throughout the period of worshipping the deity. During this limited period he must stay in house near the temple entirely as a monk, reminiscent of ancient practices of Buddhist monkhood. Moreover, as Gellner inferred, the beating of the wooden gong is an ancient tradition of Buddhist monasteries (Gellner 1993:179). Vajrayogini of Sākhu has been following the tradition of beating the log of wood in three times a day, exhibiting more or less the continuity of old tradition.

Sākhu as an ancient Trade Centre

When the Nepal-Tibet trade opened during the time of the Lichhavis, Sākhu acquired an important commercial status as a trade route between Nepal and Tibet. From the time of King Amshuvarma, Buddhism penetrated into Tibet through Bhrikuti, a daughter of the royal family from Nepal (Evans 1957:74). This gave a new form to social and economic relations between the two countries. One inscription at the time of Siva Deva II gives some references about the trade relation in the Lichhavi period (Vajracharya 2030:515). The route that passed through Sākhu was perhaps the shortest one to Kuti from Kathmandu. This relation was nourished by the rulers throughout the medieval period. From Sākhu it took nearly seven days via Kuti to Tibet. From Kathmandu, the route passed by Siphāl, Bhīmāl, Khursani Bari, Dachhi, Sarankō Chaur, Sākhu, Jaharsimha Pauwa, Bhārē Nagrē, Nawālpur, Chautara, Barabīsē and lastly Kuti in Tibet. In the course of trade many merchants migrated to Tibet from Sākhu. Their descendants still reside in Tibetan market centres and follow the same ancestral occupation. This trade relation fostered up the national economy in the earlier Malla period. At this time Nepalese currency circulated in Tibet as a part of vital trade links and activities.

During the late 18th century A.D. the Nepal-Tibet war took place on the ground of trade dispute. Later, a treaty was signed by both the countries in 1789 A.D. The second article of the treaty obliged Tibet to pay an annual

tribute of 300 *dotsed*¹ to Nepal (Upreti 1980:38). According to this treaty, Nepal received a large amount of silver from Tibet imported through the route of Sākhu. This is testified even by the oral tradition narrated by the old peoples of Sākhu. It is also said that the huge bags carrying silver were called 'Toda' made from sheep's leather. The *Todas* were carried by the people on their backs, and the carriers rested on the *pāti* (resting place) of Inla Tol, Sākhu. These bags were again lifted by the people of Sākhu up to Thali village, that is, west of Sākhu. Thus Sākhu was on the main point of Nepal-Tibet trade, benefiting it economically before the opening of Banepa-Tatopani route.

Sākhu as a Fortified Town

Although, the settlement of Sākhu evolved in the early period of Lichhavi dynasty, King Sankar Deva of the medieval period had planned and built it as a fortified town. What is unearthed from Manishaila Mahābadan is that King Sankar Deva as the first King of a planned town, combining seven villages around this area, justified the town, was built historically, on the earlier stage of medieval period. Since then, Sākhu also tried to preserve its skill in the distinct character of art and cultural heritage. It is also notable that during the writer's field visit to Sankhu in 1994, various kinds of bricks that were moved out of the ditches in the course of digging the sewage came to light. Three types of bricks were recorded at that time from a one metre deep ditch at Dhunla Tol, on the northwest edge of the town. The bricks measured 25 x 16 x 5 cm, 21 x 14 x 4 cm and 17 x 7 x 7 cm in different dimension and distinction respectively. The first one seems to be older than the rest. The first and second type were used for building purposes, while the third one was perhaps used for paving roads of the town. This strongly bolsters the evidence that the construction of the town was undertaken according to a proper plan. Similarly, some bricks of 35 x 29 x 11 cm size were also recovered on the surface of Inla Tol area which visualised the structure of an ancient palace of the town. In Newari the name *layaku* (royal palace) is still pronounced for the site, further stressing it as an ancient palace of a politically semi-independent king. The *Dabali* of Inla Tol, which is believed as the throne of the king, is 60 cm high from ground level and three metres square in plan. People mostly worshiped this place at the time of Dashian festival and Khata Yatra day. On the south edge of the town, there is a mound not above two metres from ground level. It is still considered as the *Kot* (Fort) and worship continues to be performed there on the occasion of the great Hindu festival, Dashain.

The religious text Manishaila Mahābadān carries a long story about the origin of the goddess Vajrayagini and Sākhu town. The original text,

however, was written in Sanskrit.² Varnavajra Vajracharya elaborated the story in the Newari language later. According to this text Sankara Deva ruled over Sākhu in accordance with the deity's suggestion. The text also elaborated that the town planning was first introduced by the *tantrik* teacher named Joge Deva Vajracharya. In this connection the formation of eight *tols* along with four *patis*, *dabalis* and four entrance gates were also erected in different directions of the town. The Goddesses *astamatrika* (eight female powers) were installed for protection over the town. Therefore, the plan obviously visualised spiritual as well as physical proficiency of a fortified town. In the interior part of the town the management of drinking water, link roads and installation of many gods and goddesses were made on its suitable pattern. Zanen has opined that the fortification of the town was planned according to mandala design of Buddhist tradition (Zanen 1986:148-150). According to this text each of the *astamatrika* goddesses was installed in her appropriate location, namely Kumari in Inla Tol, Nilakali Chamunda in Khalsa gate corner, Nilabhairab Rudrayani in Sakhangal gate, Vaishanavi in Om Bahal, Mahesware in Chalakhu Tol, Indrayani in Sambaha, Swetbhairab Brahmayani in Salkha Tol and Ganesh Bhairabi in Bhairabi in Bhagu gate. It has also been described that the four different gates of the town were built for different purposes. For example, the gate of Salkha (northeast) was for sending the dead body to cremation, Sahaga gate (southeast) was for sending the married daughter, Bhagu gate (southwest) was for receiving the new bride and Dhunla gate (northwest) was for welcoming and sending the deities at the time of *Khata Yatra* day. It is also interesting to note that this tradition is still live and kicking in Sākhu. Thus, Sākhu has preserved its own traditional culture that developed in distinct character of a circumscribed or fortified town. As described by Gopal Vamsavali the fortified town was open by Jayarjun Deva and Jayasthiti Malla in 490 N.S. (1370 A.D.) (Vajracharya and Malla 1985:63). This has confirmed the view that this fortified town was constructed much before this date, likely for political safety.

Origin of Vajrayogini

The Vajrayogini site was famous for Buddhist vihara from the beginning of the Christian era. The vihara was called 'Gūvihar', and precisely this site was the main centre of 'Therabada' or 'Hinayana' Buddhism. Gradually, during the past days, it also came under the influence of the new tenet of Buddhism. This is confirmed from an inscription at Sākhu, where the word 'Mahāsaṅgika' is mentioned. The word virtually indicates the new concept of Buddhist religion that was introduced in eighth century A.D. precisely as a result of continuous reform. Later, when the new ideology was advanced, *tantra* was also became embedded in the Vajrayana concept of Buddhism,

which got immense popularity in Nepal.³ *Vajra* is virtually a symbol of *tantra* and it is considered as the source of *dharma*. This conceptual view was expended at the time when Padmasambhava visited Nepal and stayed in Sākhu in the beginning of eighth century A.D. (Gyawali 2019 (V.S.):251). He had also visited Tibet and had introduced *tantrik* Buddhism in Tibet (Evanswetz 1957:72). Since then many Buddhist monasteries were built and have enshrined the *tantrik* gods and goddesses. In all the monasteries of Tibet the image of Dorje Naljorma (Vajrayogini) is being installed as a form of *Dakini*. She is being invoked at the moment of *Guru Sadhanā*. The Tibetan legends tell that at Terdium Sanctuary, 20 km west of Drikung Thil, a dangerous lake once existed. At that time Vajrayogini was manifested in the form of wisdom body of *karma Dakini* and helped to drain the lake (Loseries 1994:48). Furthermore, the cave nearby the lake is considered as the important place where Padmasambhava had spent seven years with his disciple and consort, Yeshe Tsogyal (1994:48). Sākhu, as the centre for Tibet, thus experienced a great deal of change in its *tantrik* system prior to the *tantrik* religion gaining influence over Tibet. As a result, many votives 'Chityas, as well as the image of Vajrayogini, were installed in the steep hills of Manichuda.

Manishaila mahābadān has mentioned a story about the origin of the goddess Vajrayogini. According to the story, King Asoka of Pataliputra had arranged a visit to Guru Upagupta in Kurkutārram Vihara in order to hear the spiritual discourse. In course of delivering the lecture, the guru told him that at the very beginning there was a vihara named 'Padma' in the northern Himalayan range where Buddha had delivered a lecture about the origin of Vajrayogini or Ugra Tara. Tathagat had told that the goddess had sprung from the lump of luminous flame which arose from the cliff of two stones and resided here as a famous goddess. It is also notable that in the Tibetan legend the cave Kiri Yongdzong's central channel of the roof is considered as the form of Goddess Vajrayogini (Loseries 1994:48). Thus, Vajrayogini as cited above, affiliated to the cave and stones make a strong point of her origin in steep or arid hilly regions. The Manishail Mahabadān text described its earlier story on the origin of the hill Manichuda that it was named after King Manichuda. The text itself mentioned that the story was virtually the description of the previous life of Buddha. The story, however, lacks historical proof. It also synthesizes the fact that many legendary traditions continue to cover Buddha's life in the medieval period of Kathmandu Valley.

The later Vamsavalis, on the others, state that Surya Malla (1520-1530 A.D.) started to celebrate the Khata Yatra of goddess Vajrayogini along with Jogeswora, Simhini and Byaghrini (Sharma 1968:9). However, it is difficult to sketch out its architectural references prior to the time of Pratap malla

(1641-1647 A.D.). At the time of King Pratap Malla, Vajrayogini temple was built in the *Grantha Kuta* devala style (i.e. *sikhara* style). It was Bhaskar Malla (1701-1715) who later made the Nepalese style in the place of *Grantha kuta* style (Vajracharya 2024 V.S.:378-379) in the steep hill of Manichuda.

The Iconography of Vajrayogini

The notable gilded image of Vajrayogini illustrates the representative forms of the *shakti* goddess of Buddhist *tantra*. According to Bhattacharya the image rather resembles Ugra Tara or Mahachin Tāra, which was being carried by a Bangali priest in 1315 A.D. (Bhattacharya 1987:157). But it is still difficult to testify the opinion expressed by the writer. Mahachin Tara, according to Buddhist text, should be represented in *Pratyaldhāsana* pose and stand on the corpse. She is visible in terrible face having *Khadga* and *karti* in right and *Kapala* and *utpala* in left hands, respectably. However, these iconographical features could not found with the metallic image of Vajrayogini. The figure of goddess Vajrayogini Sākhu has two hands with *khadga* in right and *nilotpala* in left hands. However, because of the inaccessibility to the shrine it is difficult to sketch out the features of the deity, the replica of the image kept inside the nearby house gives a strong support. The scholars have also accepted the same as a general conception (Sharma 1970:3, Slussar 1982:331). Buddhist texts also point out that the features of Vajrayogini should be illustrated in the terrible expression with *Vajra* in the right and *kapala* in left hands. And the *Khatavang* should be hung on her left shoulder. This form of Vajrayogini resembles with Nairatma, although Vajrayogini could be identified only in the form of her *Alidha* posture (Bhattacharya 1987:57). These features, however, do not follow the image of Vajrayogini. Here she holds *Khadga* and *Nilotpala* inspite of *Vajra* and *kapala*. The Vajrayogini of Sākhu in peaceful appearance is undoubtly dissimilar to the iconographical features of Vajrayogini mentioned by the texts. It is also reasonable to mention that the gilded image of tynpanum is also defferent from the above-cited images in its iconographical features. This image is with eight hands carrying *Khadga*, *Bindu*, *Karti* and *Vajra* in the right and *nilotpala*, *Dhanu*, *Parashu* and *Kapala* in the left hands respectably. The deity is standing on a corpse in *alidhāsana*⁴ pose with her terrible expression. However, the pose of the legs corresponds to the Vajrayogini described by text. The posture of protruding stomach and tongue does not meet with any more. In this context, the small gilded image of upper door jambs is rather identical to the features of Ugra Tara. It has four hands with *Khadga* and *kamala* in the right, while on the left there are *Patra* and *Bindu*. The small deity is also standing on a corpse in *Pratyaldhasana* posture.

The broze image of Vajrayogini is flanked by two guards—Simhini and Byagrini on her both sides. These are the popular protecters of the deity commonty found elsewhere in the form of animals. The Sākhu image, on the contrary, is being represented in human bodily forms, exhibit a notable characters of the Vajrayogini itself.

Patron Deity of Sākhu

For the people of Sākhu Vajrayogini is still considered as the patron deity. The legend joins the remote past in the derivation of the deity in Sākhu. According to the tradition, the town of Sākhu was brought into existence only by the deity's suggestion. When the Vajrayan tenet was popular in the valley, the image of Vajrayogini was placed for the wellbeing of the people in past succeeding generations on the sloppy hills of Manichuda. Later, she was equally incorporated in Hindu Pantheon and was known as one of the forms of *Dashamahabidhya*.

Vajrayogini patronised the people of Sākhu in different ways. The initiation ceremony of Buddhist Newar boys is being held in the premises of the temple, and on other occasions there is a compulsory representation of at least one person in the *Khatayātra* procession from each houses. On this occasion each participant must carry the lamps hands. The procession of the deity is managed by a group named *Chhewadi*.

People show their respect to the deity using the word “Mai” (Mother) to address her. It is done to justify the mother status or protector of the inhabitant of Sākhu. Also, there is tradition to regard her as the daughter of the inhabitant. On the first day of *Khatayātra* as it is also believed that she along with her husband and kids visit her natal home. And while the *yatra* is finalise she is being carried by the people in her original place. On the following day a group of women and men seperatly make a visit to the deity to find out whether she is in good condition.

Despite her spiritual compliments, the goddess Vajrayogini is also considered as the earthly guide to the people of Sākhu. This is testified by a big bell hung in front of the temple that is rung three times a day. The inhabitants of Sākhu, therefore, set their time and fix their working period according to the sound of the bell. If the bell rings out of its schedule, it alerts the inhabitants of some unforeseen activities. In this context, the goddess has being deserved to carry on as an important patron deity of Sākhu.

Vajrayogini and Jogeswora

The temples of Vajrayogini and Jogeswora are bulit side by side on a common coutyard in traditional Nepalese style. The two storeys temple of Jogeswora contained a Buddhist Chaitya inside the shrine. The stone Chaitya

is approximately two metres high from the ground level and has been decorated with metallic coverage. The temple has four cardinal doors with wooden tympanum in three sides and gilded in western side. Also the temple has four small niches above the door panel containing the four Dhyani Buddhas (meditating) sitting their respective postures. The Chaitya is also worshipped along with the main deity-Vajrayogini. The Chaitya is named 'Jogeswora' by the local people. In Manishaila Mahabadāna there is a story that interestingly elaborated. Jogadeo Vajracharya who had taken care of a child as mandated to him by the goddess in dream. The story further describes that the small child was later named as Sankar Deva, the first king of Sankhu town. From the legend it is suggested that Jogeswora Chaitya was named after Jogadeva Vajracharya. He as perhaps a *tantrik* teacher during that time when Vajrayan came into being in the Kathmandu Valley. Later, there had developed a tendency of worshipping the Chaitya as Jogadeo, who was considered as the form of the husband of goddess Vajrayogini. At the time of the *Khatyatra* procession the separate *Khata* of Jogeswora is carried by the people in a *Chaitya* form. The *Chaitya* housed in the near by temple is conceived as the prototype of the original one. The approach certainly carries an admixture of the traditions that considered the deity as the spiritual as well as bodily representation for commonality of Sākhū.

Conclusion

From many archaeological as well as oral traditions one can conclude that Sākhū has been preserving its religious, economic and political heritage as a whole since the beginning of our historical period. From the religious point of view, it has contributed a wide philosophical perspective to the advancement of Buddhist religion. While the trade route was opened via Sākhū, it also had acquired a religious prominence which then extended up to Tibet in the wake of eighth century A.D. This ultimately made a great change in the development of art and architecture that ennobled the place of traditional practice. This is visible in the strong beliefs and the ways of expression. This ultimately makes a strong supposition that as it bears its past pristine glories in the unique features of the early medieval town of Nepal, it is a continuity of Nepalese heritage so far.

Notes

1. In this text it has not clarified the word *dotseds*. It is fact the right pronouncation is *rdo-tshed*, which denotes a silver bullion of one about four pounds of weight (i.e. $300 \times 4 = 1200$ pounds) of Silver.
2. Many Buddhist religious texts in Sankrit connected to King Asok Avadanas were preserved in Nepal (Rays Davids- *Buddhist India*, Sushil Gupta Pvt Ltd, Calcutta, 1959, p. 127).

3. The Sanskrit religious text named 'Yakalla Viranam Chandra Maharosana Tantram' (of Sambat 547) mentioned the various *Ganas* of Vajrayogini namely Swyetchala, Pitachala, Raktachala, Shyamachala, Mohavajrya, Pishunavajrya and Irshyavajrya Vajrayogini. (Brihat Suchi Patram, fist part, Bir Library, 2021 V.S. p. 86).
4. P.R. Sharma narrated the posture *ardhaparyankasana* to this deity, however, the poture seems resemble to the *alidhasana*. (P.R. Sharma, "A note on some bronzes at Vajrayogini." *Tribhuvan University Journal*, Vol. V, No. 1 (1970)

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टोखा: एक ऐतिहासिक चर्चा

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परिचय

काठमाडौँ-उपत्यकाको मध्यकालीन इतिहासमा टोखा एउटा सांक्रामिक स्थलको रूपमा प्रसिद्धी पाएको प्रदेश मान्न सकिन्छ। शिवपुरी पर्वतको दक्षिण-पश्चिमी काखमा अवस्थित यस स्थलको पूर्व-दक्षिणमा विष्णुमती नदी र पश्चिममा सपन खोला रहेका छन्। चण्डेश्वरी र सरस्वती गाउँ विकास समितिमा विभाजित यो उत्तर-दक्षिण तन्किएको समतल भूमिमा फैलिएको छ। नेवार समाज रहेको यहाँ शैव, शाक्त, वैष्णव, बौद्ध, आदि विभिन्न धार्मिक सम्प्रदायअन्तर्गतका देवदेवीका मन्दिर, ढुंगे धारा, पाटी-पौवा आदि विभिन्न सांस्कृतिक सम्पदाहरू रहेका छन् भने चण्डेश्वरी यात्रा र सपनतीर्थ मेला यहाँका प्रसिद्ध धार्मिक चाडपर्वमा पर्दछन्।

काठमाडौँबाट नुवाकोट, धुन्चे भई भोट जाने मार्गमा पर्ने यो प्रदेशमा लिच्छविकालमा वस्ती बसिसकेको बुझिन्छ (बज्राचार्य, वि.सं. २०३०, पृ. २६६-२६७)। मध्यकालमा आएर यो प्रदेशको राजनैतिक, आर्थिक तथा सांस्कृतिक विकास भएको देखिन्छ। मूल राजनीतिक-सांस्कृतिक केन्द्र काठमाडौँ वरिपरिका थानकोट, कीर्तिपुर, खोकना, वुङ्गमती, चापागाउँ, लुभु, ठिमी आदिले जनमानसमा प्रभाव पारे जस्तै यस्को वास्तविक महत्त्वसंग वाह्य जनसमूह परिचित भएको देखिँदैन। यसले शिवपुरीस्थित टोखा सेनेटोरियमको नामले मात्र प्रसिद्धी पाएको देखिन्छ (माली, ई. १९७९, पृ. ४-५)। आजकल यहाँ शाही नेपाली सैनिकद्वारा स्टाफ कलेज सञ्चालन गरिएको छ। तसर्थ क्षयरोग निवारण अस्पतालभित्रको एउटा एकान्त अँध्यारो कोठाको अपहेलित एक रोगी जस्तै यो टोखाको ऐतिहासिक महत्त्वलाई प्रकाशमा ल्याउने उद्देश्यले यो लेख यहाँ प्रस्तुत गरिएको छ।

टोखाको नामाकरण

टोखालाई आजकल भैं मध्यकालको पूर्वार्द्धमा पनि टोखा नै भनिन्थ्यो (बज्राचार्य र मल्ल, ई. १९८५, पृ. ४६)। मध्यकालको उत्तरार्द्धका दुई दर्जनभन्दा बढी अभिलेखहरूमा यसलाई 'तोखा देस', 'टोखा ग्राम' भनिएका छन् भने कतै 'जयपुरी नगर', 'जयपुली देस' (श्रेष्ठ, वि.सं. २०५१, पृ. ५१)। यसबाट त्यसताका यो प्रदेशले टोखा नामले प्रसिद्धी पाएको र यस्को आर्को नाम जयपुर पनि रहेको कुरामा विवाद देखिँदैन।

मध्यकालमा कुनै एउटा प्रदेशको नाम जनभाषा र संस्कृत भाषामा वेग्लावेग्लै राखिने प्रचलन पनि रहेको थियो। टोखाको नाम जनभाषामा 'टोखा' र संस्कृतमा 'जयपुर' रहेको देखिन्छ। यसै गरी उपत्यकाका अन्य प्रदेश जस्तै धानकोट (धंक्बाठ) लाई सुभापुर, बलम्बुलाई भर्तिपुर, किंसिपिडीलाई हस्तिनापुर भनिएका जस्ता दुई थरी नाम हुने प्रदेशहरू अरू धेरै पाइन्छन्। यी नामहरूमा जनभाषाको नाम समाजेमा बढी चलनचल्तीमा आएको पाइन्छ।

कुनै पनि ठाउँको नाम एक-एक अर्थ विशेषको आधारमा राखिएको हुन्छ। टोखा नेवारी भाषामा 'तुखा' को अपभ्रंश शब्द मान्न सकिन्छ। नेवारी भाषामा 'तु' को उखु र 'खा' को खाल्डो (प्रदेश) अर्थ लगाइएको पाइन्छ (मानन्धर, इ. १९८६, पृ. ९४ र ३८)। लिच्छविकालमा 'खा' प्रत्यय स्थाननाम शब्दहरू पाइन्छन् तर ती 'खा' संस्कृत भाषाका नभएर तिब्बतो-वर्मन हुन् र यस्ता प्रत्यय नेवारी भाषामा अद्यापि प्रयोग हुँदै आएका छन् (मल्ल, इ. १९८१, पृ. १३ र १६)। काठमाडौँ-उपत्यकामा 'खा' प्रत्यय स्थाननाम शब्दहरू यट्खा, न्हयोखा, प्यूखा, कोटखा आदि अद्यापि प्रचलित रहेको पाइन्छ। यसर्थ 'उखु पाइने प्रदेश' हुनाले त्यसको नाम 'तुखा' रहेको र 'त' लाई 'ट' पनि उच्चारण गरिने हुँदा 'तुखा' लाई उच्चारण गर्न सजिलोको लागि 'तोखा' र पछि 'टोखा' हुन गएको देखिन्छ। अर्को महत्त्वपूर्ण कुरो, त्यस भेकमा उखुको उत्पादन प्रशस्त हुने हुँदा त्यसबाट 'चाकु' (गुड) बनाई उद्योग-व्यापार गरिन्थ्यो। टोखाका महेन्द्र वस्नेतले ८० रोपनी जग्गाको बार्षिक ८० धार्मि गुड कर स्वरूप भन्सारमा बुझाएको बारेको वि.सं. १८६५ को एउटा पत्र प्राप्त भएकोले त्यसताकासम्म पनि गुड उत्पादन गरिँदै गरेको कुरा स्पष्ट हुन्छ (यस सम्बन्धी पत्र यस केन्द्रमा छ)। 'टुसाल' भनी उखुको व्यापारमा एक किसिमको कर लगाइएको थियो (वैद्य, इ. १९९३, पृ. ३५२)। अर्को कुरा, भक्तपुरको 'दही' र 'टोपी', खोकनाको 'तेल' भने भै टोखाको 'चाकु' प्रसिद्ध मानिन्थ्यो। प्रत्येक वर्ष मनाइने माघसंक्रान्ति पर्वमा उपत्यकाका बुढापाकाहरू टोखाको चाकुको सम्फना र प्रशंसा अद्यापि गर्दछन्। अतः उखु उत्पादन हुने प्रदेश भएकोले नेवारी भाषामा यसको नाम 'तुखा' पछि 'टोखा' रहन गएको कुरो स्पष्ट भएको छ।

सांग्रामिक स्थलको रूपमा टोखा

टोखाकोटको निर्माण भएको तिथिभित्ति निश्चित रूपमा तोक्न ऐतिहासिक सामग्रीको अभाव छ। टोखाको सांस्कृतिक दृष्टिले केन्द्र रूपको तपलाछी टोलको चोकमा एउटा लिच्छविकालीन अभिलेख रहेको छ (वज्राचार्य, वि.सं. २०३०, पृ. २६६-२६७)। संवत् ५९१ को यस अभिलेखको केही अंश फुटी अस्पष्ट रहेको छ तापनि यहाँ चार किल्लाभित्रका जनतालाई यस कुरोमा दुःख नदिनु र अनावश्यक पिरलेमा राजाले नसहने कुरा उल्लेख गर्दै भविष्यमा हुने राजाले समेत यसको पालना गर्नु पर्ने ब्यहोरा परेको छ। यसबाट टोखा किल्लाबारे कुनै प्रकाश परेको भने पाइँदैन।

मध्यकालमा आएर मात्र टोखा किल्लाबारेमा प्रकाश परेको पाइन्छ। यसको उल्लेख सर्व प्रथम ने.सं. ३७५ मा आएको छ (वज्राचार्य र मल्ल, ई. १९८७, पृ. ४६)। त्यहाँ जयदेवले किल्लामा रहेको सुन लुटेको (?) हुँदा टोखा र नेपी किल्लाहरूले विद्रोह गरेको विषय

परेको छ। टोखाकोटको उल्लेख विभिन्न मितिको विभिन्न घटनाहरूमा भएको छ (ऐजन्, पृ. ३६, ५८, ६१ र ६२)। यसबाट मध्यकालको पूर्वार्द्धमा टोखा एउटा बलियो किल्लाको रूपमा प्रतिष्ठापित भएको कुरामा शंका रहँदैन। मध्यकालमा आएर यस किसिमका किल्लाहरूको संख्यामा बृद्धि भयो। मध्यकालको पूर्वार्द्धमा राज्य विभाजन क्रम शुरू भयो। विक्रमको बाह्रौं शताब्दीमा आएर तीन स्वतन्त्र राज्यहरू देखा परे। एकले अर्कोको आक्रमणबाट सुरक्षित हुन, अर्कोमाथि आक्रमण गर्न तथा राज्यको सुरक्षा व्यवस्थित तुल्याउन गढी-किल्लाको निर्माण गर्न अत्यावश्यक थियो। अर्को कुरा, त्यसताका सांग्रामिक दृष्टिले महत्त्वपूर्ण स्थलहरूमा वस्ती बसाउनु पर्ने बाध्यता पनि भयो। यसरी मध्यकालको अन्त्यतिर नेपालमा राज्य संख्या ५२ भन्दा बढी पुग्न गएकोले पनि किल्लाहरूको संख्यामा झन बृद्धि हुन गएको थियो। टोखाको भूअवस्थितिले पनि यो ठाउँ किल्लाको रूपमा रहनु स्वभाविक देखिन्छ।

मल्ल राज्यको विभाजनपूर्व काठमाडौँ-उपत्यका वरिपरिका प्रदेशहरू एक किसिमको किल्ला स्वरूपका थिए। कीर्तिपुर, थानकोट, बलम्बु, नौलिंगस्थान, कपन, गोकर्ण, साँखु, साँगा आदि किल्ला रूपका वस्ती थिए भन्ने कुरा तात्कालिक सामग्रीहरूबाट स्पष्ट हुन्छ (ऐजन्, पृ. ५९, ५०, ५९, ११७)। यसबाट राइटले उपत्यकाका चारैतिर होचा पहाडमा किल्लाहरूको अवशेष भएको र ती किल्लामा चारैतिर खाइ र ढिस्का देखेको कुरा सत्य देखिन आउँछ (राइट. इ. १९६६, पृ. ४५)। प्राचीनकालदेखि नै काठमाडौँ-उपत्यकाका चाँगुनारायण, स्वयम्भू, वज्रयोगिनी, पशुपतिनाथ आदि देवस्थलहरू वनगढ रूपका थिए (वज्राचार्य र श्रेष्ठ, वि.सं. २०३७, पृ. ४५०)। यी कुराहरूबाट किल्ला रूपको टोखा वस्ती मध्यकालको पूर्वार्द्धमा बसेको थियो भन्ने कुराको पुष्टि हुन्छ।

टोखाको भौगोलिक स्थितिलाई नियाल्दा यो पूर्वी, पश्चिमी र दक्षिणी भागभन्दा निकै उठेको र उत्तरी भाग भने समतल रहेको पाइन्छ। यो वस्तीको उत्तरी र दक्षिणी भागमा ईटाद्वारा निर्मित एक एक वटा ठूला प्रवेश द्वार बनाइएका छन्। ती द्वारहरू पछिल्लो कालमा निर्माण गरिएको देखिन्छ तापनि यस्तै पुरानो प्रवेशद्वारको सम्झना दिलाइरहेको बुझिन्छ। त्यसताकाका अन्य वस्तीमध्ये कीर्तिपुर, बलम्बु आदिमा ईटाद्वारा निर्मित ऐतिहासिक प्रवेशद्वारहरू अद्यापि देख्न पाइन्छन्।

टोखा वस्तीको माथिल्लो भागमा मूल कोट रहेको छ जहाँ तुलजा भवानीको स्थापना गरिएको छ। यसलाई 'लायकु' भनिन्छ। संस्कृतमा यसलाई राजकूल वा राजप्रसाद भनिन्छ। यो कोटको गारो तीन हात चौडा भएको र त्यहाँ दुई दुई धारा सहित इनार पुरिएको कुरा स्थानीय बुढापाकाहरू सुनाउँछन्। चण्डेश्वरीको प्रसिद्ध जात्रा यहीबाट सरकारी पूजा लिएपछि मात्र आरम्भ हुने परम्परा रहेको छ। यसले राजनैतिक, प्रशासनिकका साथै सांस्कृतिक भूमिका निभाएको पाइन्छ।

जयदेवविरुद्ध विद्रोह

टोखा एउटा छुट्टै राज्य नभएर काठमाडौँको एउटा महत्त्वपूर्ण सांग्रामिक स्थलको रूपमा मात्र रहेको हुँदा यसको छुट्टै इतिहास छैन भन्ने कुरा माथि नै चर्चा गरिसकिएको छ।

यस स्थानको उल्लेख नेपालको इतिहासमा महत्त्वपूर्ण प्रकाश पार्ने गोपालराज वंशावलीमा विभिन्न मितिका विभिन्न राजनैतिक घटनासंग जोडिएर आएकोले ती छरिएर रहेका घटनाहरूलाई क्रमवद्ध रूपमा प्रस्तुत गर्ने प्रयास यहाँ गरिएको छ। यहाँ कतिपय घटनाहरू स्पष्ट रूपमा दिइएको पाइँदैन। विक्रमको चौधौँ शताब्दीको आरम्भमा अर्थात् ने.सं. ३७४ आश्विनमा टोखाले विद्रोह गरेको घटना पहिलो पाइएको हुँदा यसबारे प्रकाश पार्न मध्यकालको तात्कालिक इतिहास संक्षिप्त रूपमा यहाँ प्रस्तुत गरिएको छ।

नेपालको इतिहासमा लिच्छविशासनको अन्त्यपछि जुन राज्यविभाजनको लहर चल्यो यो घटना राजनैतिक दृष्टिले महत्त्वपूर्ण देखा पर्छ। लिच्छवि राजाहरूले उपत्यका केन्द्रबाट पूर्व र पश्चिमका सामन्त शासकहरूमार्फत राज्य चलाइरहेका थिए भने मध्यकालको पूर्वार्द्धमा पूर्व र पश्चिमका टाढा-टाढाका प्रदेशहरूलाई 'विषय' (जिल्ला) जस्ता विभिन्न प्रशासकीय एकाईमा विभक्त गरी विषयपतिमार्फत शासन संचालन गरिरहेको पाइन्छ। यो अवस्थामा केन्द्रमा कमजोर शासक देखा परेको समयमा भने सामन्त शासकले मौकाको फाइदा उठाई आफूलाई केन्द्रको अधिनबाट मुक्त गराई स्वतन्त्र शासक बन्ने उद्योग पनि गर्दथे। यसले समय-समयमा राजनैतिक संकट निम्त्याउनु स्वाभाविक देखिन्छ। तर यस अवस्थामा नेपाल बाहिरका शासक अर्थात् महत्वाकांक्षीहरूले नयाँ राज्यको स्थापना गर्ने अवसर समेत पाउने सम्भावना रहन्छ। यसरी वि.सं. ११५४ मा भारतका कर्नाट वंशका नान्यदेवले काठमाडौँ-उपत्यकाको दक्षिणी प्रदेश तराइमा तिरहुत राज्यको स्थापना गरे (सिन्हा, इ. १९७९, पृ. ३१-३२)। यिनले राजधानी सिम्रौनगढबाट तराइको निकै ठूलो प्रदेशमा शासन चलाई नेपालमण्डललाई टुक्न्याएका थिए। अर्कोतर्फ, काठमाडौँ-उपत्यका-पश्चिमको कर्णाली प्रदेशमा विक्रमको बाह्रौँ शताब्दीमा नागराजले स्वतन्त्र राज्य स्थापना गरी पश्चिमतर्फबाट अलग्न्याएका थिए (योगी, वि.सं. २०१३, पृ. ५९)। यसरी विक्रमको बाह्रौँ शताब्दीको पूर्वार्द्धमा केन्द्रमा देखा परेको कमजोरीले नेपालमा तीन स्वतन्त्र राज्य स्थापना हुन गएको कुरो स्पष्टतः देखा परेको छ।

यो राज्य विभाजनले गर्दा एकले अर्कोलाई दबाउन तेस्रो राज्यसंग संगठन गर्ने जस्ता राजनैतिक गठबन्धन तथा दाउपेच बढी राज्यको शान्ति र विकासमा ठूलो अवरोध खडा हुन थाल्यो भने अर्कोतर्फ द्वैध शासन प्रणालीले केन्द्रको शासनमा प्रत्यक्ष कमजोरी ल्याएको थियो। यस क्रममा राजकुलमा शक्तिको लागि प्रतिस्पर्धा र संघर्ष देखा पर्‍यो। यसमा सफलता प्राप्तिको लागि एक पक्षले कर्णाली प्रदेशको खस राज्यलाई गुहार्नु पर्‍यो भने अर्को पक्षले तिरहुतका डोयलाई। यसरी गृहकलहमा बाह्य राज्यको हस्तक्षेप गराउने नीति राष्ट्रको हितमा कहिल्यै नहुने तथा यो स्थितिमा राष्ट्रको अस्तित्वमा नै आँच आउने सम्भावना हुन्छ। यसो हो तापनि खस र तिरहुत राज्यहरू उपत्यकाका राजपरिवार र राज्यको आन्तरिक मामलासँग प्रत्यक्ष संलग्न रहेर आर्थिकका साथै राजनैतिक फायदा उठाउन सफल भएका थिए।

अब वंशावलीमा उल्लेखित टोखा सम्वन्धी घटनाहरूको बारे चर्चा गरिन्छ। ने.सं. ३७४ आश्विनमा जयदेवले किल्लाको सुन लिएको हुँदा नेपी र टोखा किल्लाहरूले विद्रोह गरेको

कुरा लेखिएको छ (वज्राचार्य र मल्ल, ई. १९८५, पृ. ४६)। यी जयदेवबारेमा विस्तृत विवरण प्रस्तुत गर्न सामग्रीको अभाव छ तापनि केही हस्तालिखित ग्रन्थ र वंशावलीबाट केही कुरामा प्रकाश परेको छ। यिनी राजा अभय मल्लका छोरा थिए (पेटेक, इ. १९५८, पृ. ९)। यिनको उल्लेख सर्वप्रथम ने.सं. ३७७ को एउटा हस्तलिखित ग्रन्थमा 'राजाधिराज' भनिएको छ (ऐजन् पृ. ९०)। त्यसताका यिनी राजा थिए भन्ने कुरोको पुष्टि वंशावलीबाट पनि भएको छ। अभयमल्लको मृत्यु ने.सं. ३७५ आषाढको ठूलो भूकम्पमा भएको देखिएकोले यिनी त्यसैताका राजा भएका थिए। यिनलाई "... भवन्त श्रीजयदेव प्वहसन ..." भनिएको हुँदा यिनी वनेपाका थिए भन्ने कुरा देखिएको छ। यिनको मृत्यु ने.सं. ३७८ मा भएको देखिन्छ (रेग्मी, ई. १९५६, पृ. ३२२)।

विद्रोह जस्तो घटनाले राजनैतिक इतिहासमा महत्त्वपूर्ण स्थान राख्दछ। यहाँ विद्रोह भएको घटनाका मूल कारण युवराज छुँदै जयदेवले किल्लाको सुन लुटेको देखिन्छ। तर यिनले कुन किल्लाबाट कस्को र कुन परिमाणमा सुन लुटेको हो भन्ने कुरो यो वंशावलीबाट प्रष्टिदैन भने अर्कोतर्फ टोखा र नेपी किल्लाहरूको यो सुनसँग कस्तो सम्बन्ध अर्थात् यसमा कस्तो अधिकार रहेको थियो आदि विषयमा प्रकाश परेको पाइँदैन। यो विद्रोहको परिणामस्वरूप जयदेवले ने.सं. ३७६ माघमा नेपी किल्ला आफ्नो कब्जामा लिएका थिए भन्ने देखिन्छ (वज्राचार्य र मल्ल, ई. १९८५, पृ. ४६)। यी घटनाबारे प्रष्ट पार्न अरू अध्ययन-अनुसन्धान हुनु आवश्यक देखिन्छ।

टोखामा गोपालदेवको हत्या

टोखा सम्बन्धी घटनाहरूमा ने.सं. ४६० पौषको विद्रोहमा गोपालदेवको हत्या गरिएको घटना दोस्रो महत्त्वपूर्ण मान्न सकिन्छ। यहाँ उल्लेखित गोपालदेव को थिए र यो घटनाको सृजना हुनमा के कस्ता कारण जिम्मेवार थिए भन्ने कुरा प्रष्ट्याउन तात्कालिक इतिहासका घटनाक्रम थाहा पाउनु आवश्यक भएकोले यहाँ सो संक्षेपमा दिइन्छ।

त्रिपुरमा अरि मल्ल र रूद्रमल्लको संयुक्त शासन चलेको थियो। रूद्रमल्लले आफ्नो नातेदार अरि मल्ललाई गद्दीमा राखी प्रभाव फैलाएका थिए। यिनी गद्दीका हकदार भने थिएनन्। यिनी शक्तिशाली बनेपछि त्रिपुरलाई एउटा गढको रूप दिए। समय समयमा केन्द्रको कमजोरीको मौका छोपी विद्रोह गरी स्वतन्त्र हुन चाहने महत्वाकांक्षी स्थानीय शासकहरूलाई पनि यिनले नियन्त्रण गरेका थिए (वज्राचार्य र श्रेष्ठ, वि. सं. २०३२, पृ. ३३)। ने.सं. ४४६ मा यिनको मृत्यु भइदिनाले राज्य संचालनमा कमजोरी देखा पर्न थाल्यो (वज्राचार्य र मल्ल, ई. १९८५, पृ. ५४)। यिनका दुवै छोराहरू सानै उमेरमा मरेकाले छोरी नायकदेवी मात्र उत्तराधिकारी रूपमा थिइन्। नायकदेवीको आमा रूद्र मल्लसँगै सती गएकोले यिनको रेखदेख बज्यै पदुमलदेवीबाट हुन थाल्यो। ने.सं. ४५० मा नायकदेवीको विवाह काशीका राजवंशका कुमार हरिश्चन्द्रसँग भयो। हरिश्चन्द्रका भाइ गोपालदेवको विवाह कामादेवीसँग भयो (ऐजन्, पृ. ५४)।

हरिश्चन्द्रले प्रभावशाली रूद्रमल्लकी छोरीसँगको नाताले आफ्नो प्रभाव जमाउन थाले। तर यो कुरो केही महत्वाकांक्षी भारदारलाई अप्रिय भयो। यसरी नातिनी ज्वाँई र केही विरोधी भारदारहरू बीच घात-प्रतिघात हुने लक्षण देखी पदुमलदेवीले नातिनी ज्वाँईको सुरक्षार्थ केही प्रभावशाली भारदारहरूलाई आफ्नो पक्षमा मिलाई केही विरोधीको हत्या समेत गराएकी थिइन्। तर यिनको मृत्युपश्चात् हरिश्चन्द्र निकै कमजोर बने। यो मौकामा विद्रोहीहरूले ने.सं. ४५३ वैशाखमा हरिश्चन्द्र विरूद्ध हतियार समेत उठाए, हरिश्चन्द्र यसको सामना गर्न असमर्थ भइ कान्तिपुर शरण पर्न गए। अन्तमा ने.सं. ४५५ जेठमा यिनी विष प्रयोगद्वारा मारिए (ऐजन्, पृ. ३६)।

संरक्षिका बज्यैको मृत्यु तथा पतिको हत्या भएपछि टुहुरी जस्ती नायकदेवीको हेरचाह देवलदेवीद्वारा हुन थाल्यो। राजदरबारमा शरणार्थीको रूपमा बसेकी यिनी तिरहुतका राजा हरसिंह देवकी रानी थिइन्। तिरहुत राज्यमा ने.सं. ४४६ माघमा एउटा ठूलो घटना घट्यो (ऐजन्, पृ. ५४)। दिल्लीका बादशाह गयाशुद्दिन तुगलक वंगालको विद्रोह दबाई प्रशस्त फौजसाथ तिरहुत नजिकैको बाटोबाट फर्कदै थिए। राजा हरसिंह देवले तुगलकको त्यत्रो ठूलो फौज आएको देखी भ्रमवश आफ्नो राज्यमा आक्रमण गर्न आएको सम्झी दुर्गबाट जनतासहित बाहिर निस्की आक्रमण गरे। तर त्यति ठूलो सैन्यका अगाडि केही नलागी बनदुर्गभित्र भागे र त्यहाँ पनि बनदुर्ग ध्वंश पारी आक्रमण गरेकाले हरसिंहदेव रानी देवलदेवी, छोरा जगतसिंह आदि सुरक्षाका लागि दोलखातर्फ आउँदा हरसिंहदेव बाटैमा मरे; अन्यहरू समातिएर शरणार्थीका रूपमा दरबारमा ल्याइएका थिए। यी देवलदेवी शाहसी र महत्वाकांक्षी थिइन्। यिनी आफ्नो छोरा जगतसिंह नायकदेवीसँग विवाह गरी शक्तिशाली भएको देख्न चाहन्थिन्। अन्ततः नायकदेवीको जगतसिंहसँग दोस्रो विवाह भयो। जगतसिंह पनि महत्वाकांक्षी बनी शक्ति आफ्नो हातमा पार्ने प्रयासमा लागे।

उता गोपालदेव आफ्नो दाज्यू हरिश्चन्द्रको हत्या भएको सुनी राजकाज आफ्नो हात पार्ने उद्देश्यले षड्यन्त्रमा लागे। सत्ताका लागि आमाको शसक्त सहयोग पाएर केही प्रभावशाली भारदारहरूलाई आफ्नो पक्षमा मिलाई ने.सं. ४५७ जेठमा गोपालदेवलाई भक्तपुरबाट ललितपुर र त्यहाँबाट पनि टाढा धपाए (ऐजन्, पृ. ५७)। गोपालदेव ने.सं. ४६० मा जगतसिंहसँग टक्कर लिन प्रभावशाली भारदार जोगराम मुल्मीलाई आफ्नो पक्षमा मिलाई टोखामा गए। त्यहाँबाट यिनले जनतालाई उक्साई विद्रोह गरे। तर तुरून्तै त्रिपुरबाट आएका सैन्यले टोखा आफ्नो नियन्त्रणमा लिई विद्रोह दबाए। टोखा किल्लाभित्रका सबै विद्रोहीहरू समातिए, गोपालदेवको टाउको काटियो। यसरी यो घटनाको अन्त्य टोखा किल्लामा हुन गएको थियो।

टोखामा पशुपति मल्ल

ने.सं. ४४६ मा पशुपति मल्ल टोखामा पुगेको घटना राजनैतिक दृष्टिले महत्त्वपूर्ण मान्न सकिन्छ। यसबारे खुलस्त पार्न तात्कालिक राजनैतिक अवस्थाको चर्चा यहाँ संक्षेपमा गरिन्छ।

ने.सं. ४६४ मा अरि मल्लको मृत्यु भयो। यिनीपछि राजगद्दीको हकदार नहुँदा तीन वर्षसम्म गद्दी खाली रह्यो (रेग्मी, ई. १९५६, पृ. ३७५)। त्यहाँ गृहकलह हुने संभावना देखिएकोले यसको निराकरणका लागि आनन्ददेवका मठ्याहा छोरा राजदेव सर्वसम्मतिले गद्दीमा राखिए। यत्तिकैमा पशुपति मल्ल कैदमा परे (वज्राचार्य र मल्ल इ. १९८५, पृ. ५३)। यिनलाई कपन किल्लाबाट जोगराम मुलमी र सहज मुलमीले त्रिपुरमा लगेको कुरा त्यहाँ परेको छ। त्यहाँबाट ने.सं. ४४६ मा पशुपति मल्ल टोखामा बसेको देखिन्छ (ऐजन्, पृ. ७२)। ने.सं. ४६८ जेठमा यिनी र यिनकी आमालाई ललितपुरबाट निकाली भुङ्गलछैं किल्लामा राखिएको थियो र ने.सं. ४६९ मार्गमा पशुपति मल्लको मृत्यु कैदमा भएको उल्लेख पाइन्छ (ऐजन्, पृ. ६०)। यिनको उल्लेख मल्लवंशवृक्षमा पाइँदैन। यिनलाई अरिमल्लको छोरा तथा उत्तराधिकारी थिए भनिएको छ (पेटेक, इ. १९५८, पृ. ११७)। तर यो नाताबारे स्पष्ट भएको पाइँदैन। यिनले राजगद्दीको लागि बिद्रोह गर्न नसकुन् भन्ने अभिप्रायले यिनलाई कैदी जीवन बिताउन बाध्य तुल्याइएको बुझिन्छ। यिनले टोखामा रहँदा के कस्तो कदम चाले भन्ने कुरा रहस्यमय नै रहेको छ।

टोखामा जेतपालको शरण

महाथ जेतपाल नुवाकोटका एक प्रसिद्ध भारादार थिए। महाथ त्यसताका महामंत्री अर्थात् मुख्य मंत्री मानिन्थ्यो। तात्कालिक प्रसिद्ध भारदार जयसिंहरामवर्द्धन, अनेकराम आदि महाथ पदमै रहेका थिए। त्यसताका सामन्तद्वारा शासित प्रदेशहरूमा यस्ता महाथहरूले स्थानीय प्रशासनमा महत्त्वपूर्ण सहयोग पुर्‍याउने व्यवस्था थियो। यत्ति ठूलो पदमा आसिन यी जेतपाल नुवाकोटबाट किन धपाइए भन्ने कुरा रहस्यमय रहेको छ। आर्थिक तथा सांग्रामिक दृष्टिले महत्त्वपूर्ण प्रदेश नुवाकोटमा सामन्त जुग ने.सं. ४६५ मा स्वतन्त्र शासन चलाइरहेका थिए। यिनले यसै समयमा उपत्यकाको त्रिपुरको भ्रमण गरेका थिए (वज्राचार्य र मल्ल, ई. १९८५, पृ. ५९)। यिनी यसतर्फ आउनाको कारण खुलस्त भएको छैन। तर उता देवलदेवीले अनेकराम, अभयराम जस्ता प्रभावशाली भारदारहरूलाई आफ्नो पक्षमा मिलाई शक्ति बढाउँदै नुवाकोटमाथि नियन्त्रण गर्नेतर्फ दृष्टि दिदै गरेकी थिइन् (वज्राचार्य र श्रेष्ठ, वि.सं. २०३२, पृ. ३७)। यस क्रममा जेतपाल र जुग बीच राजनैतिक विवाद परी जेतपाल नुवाकोटबाट निष्कासित भएका थिए कि भनी अनुमानसम्म गर्न सकिन्छ। यसरी निकालिएका यी जेतपाल ने. सं. ४७८ मार्गमा टोखामै शरण पर्न आउनुमा कुनै रहस्य हुनु स्वाभाविक देखिन्छ।

राजनैतिक कारणवश राजा तथा भारादार देश छाडी भाग्न परेमा सुरक्षित किल्लाहरूमा शरण पर्न जाने गरेको उदाहरण नपाइने होइन। ने.सं. ५०१ मा जयस्थिति मल्लले कमजोर गद्दीनशीन राजा अर्जुन मल्ललाई पन्छाई आफ्नो शक्ति बढाएका थिए। सर्वसाधारण जनताले राजाको राज्यच्युत भएको वास्तविक कुरो थाहा नपाउन् भन्ने अभिप्रायले यिनले ठूलो जात्रा गरी उनलाई वनेपा धपाए। तर यो षडयन्त्र बुझेका अर्जुन मल्ल राजगद्दी फिर्ता गर्ने उद्देश्यले गोकर्ण किल्लामा शरण परेका थिए (वज्राचार्य र अरू, वि.सं. २०१९, पृ. ७५)।

ढोखाभा राजमाता

राजमाता ऋद्धिलक्ष्मी कान्तिपुर राज्यका राजा पाथिवेन्द्र मल्लकी रानी तथा भूपालेन्द्र मल्लकी माता थिइन्। प्रसिद्ध राजा प्रताप मल्लको मृत्युपश्चात् केही कालसम्म बालक राजा हुनाको कारणले चिकुटी, लक्ष्मीनारायण जोशी जस्ता भारदारहरू शक्तिशाली भएका थिए भने अन्य छिमेकी राज्यका राजाहरू प्रभावशाली रहेका थिए। यसबाट त्यहाँ राजनैतिक अस्थिरता आएको थियो।

राजा भूपालेन्द्र मल्ल आफ्नो पिता पाथिवेन्द्र मल्लको मृत्यु विष-प्रयोगद्वारा भएपछि आठ वर्षकै नावालक उमेरमा राजा भएका थिए। त्यसताका चौतरा लक्ष्मीनारायण जोशीको चकचकी थियो। राजमाता ऋद्धिलक्ष्मीले पनि यिनलाई साथ दिएकी थिइन्। भूपालेन्द्रले आफू अलि समर्थ भएपछि राज्यको वास्तविक वस्तुस्थिति बुझ्न थाले। यस क्रममा यिनी हात्ती खेदा, धार्मिक कार्यहरूमा राजमातासँग संलग्न भए तापनि वास्तवमा राजमाताको विगतको कार्यपद्धतिसँग सन्तुष्ट थिएनन्। यिनमा पाथिवेन्द्र मल्लको मृत्यु विष प्रयोगद्वारा हुनु, राजमाताको लक्ष्मीनारायणसँगको सम्बन्ध जस्ता विषयमा शंका-उपशंका उठ्न थाल्यो। यसको परिणामस्वरूप राजमाताविरूद्ध आफ्नो विरोध दर्शाउन यिनी राजदरबार छोडेर कहिले गुह्रयेश्वरी त कहिले साँखु बस्न थाले। अन्तमा यिनले राजमातालाई कैद गरी ढोखामा पठाएको घटना यस सन्दर्भमा उल्लेख्य रहेको पाइन्छ (तेवारी, वि.सं. २०१, पृ. ४४)।

ढोखा गोरबा अधिराज्यमा

राजा यक्ष मल्लको मृत्यु ने.सं. ६०२ मा भएपछि काठमाडौँ-उपत्यकाको राजनैतिक अवस्थामा ठूलो परिवर्तन आयो। उनका छोराहरू राय मल्ल, रत्न मल्ल, रण मल्ल, राममल्ल, अरि मल्ल, पूर्ण मल्ल र छोरीका छोरा भीम मल्लको संयुक्त शासन चल्यो। यो पद्धतिमा अधिकार तथा क्षेत्र विभाजन नहुँदा यो शासन व्यवस्थित हुन सकेन र यिनीहरूमा एकले अर्कोलाई उछिनी आफ्नो एकलौटी राज्य स्थापना गर्ने कुरामा प्रतिस्पर्धा चल्यो। यिनमा चतुर तथा महत्वाकांक्षी रत्न मल्ल आफ्नो दाजुभाइहरूसँगको संयुक्त शासनमा सरिक हुने तथा अर्कोतिर भिन्नभिन्नै आफ्नो मात्र स्वतन्त्र राज्य स्थापना गर्ने उद्योगमा लागे। अन्ततः यिनी कान्तिपुरमा एकलौटी शासनाधिकार जमाई ललितपुरमा आफ्नो प्रभाव स्थापना गर्न सफल भए (रेग्मी, इ. १९५६, पृ. ४६७)। यसरी काठमाडौँ-उपत्यकाको एउटा सिङ्गो मल्ल राज्य विभाजन भई कान्तिपुर, ललितपुर र भक्तपुर गरी तीन छुट्टै राज्यहरूको स्थापना भयो। यो सांघामिक तथा साँस्कृतिक दृष्टिले महत्त्वको प्रदेश ढोखा कान्तिपुर राज्यमा पर्न गयो।

कान्तिपुरका राजाहरूमध्ये प्रताप मल्ल, पाथिवेन्द्र मल्ल, महीन्द्रसिंह र जयप्रकाश मल्लताकाका धेरै अभिलेखहरू प्राप्त भएका छन्। यहाँ प्राप्त भएका चार दर्जनभन्दा बढी अभिलेखहरू राजनैतिक दृष्टिले भन्दा साँस्कृतिक दृष्टिले बढी महत्त्वका रहेका छन्। यस प्रदेशको साँस्कृतिक महत्त्वबारे पछि छुट्टै शीर्षकमा चर्चा गरिने छ।

कान्तिपुरका अन्तिम राजा जयप्रकाश मल्लको राज्यकालमा यो टोखा राजा पृथ्वीनारायण शाहको कब्जामा पर्न गएको थियो। पृथ्वीनारायण शाहले काठमाडौँ-उपत्यकाका मल्ल राज्यहरू विजय गर्ने सिलसिलामा कान्तिपुर राज्यअन्तर्गतको आर्थिक तथा सांग्रामिक दृष्टिले महत्त्वपूर्ण प्रदेश नुवाकोट वि.सं. १८०१ मा विजय गरी एउटा महत्त्वपूर्ण उपलब्धि हासिल गरेका थिए। यिनले युद्धद्वारा मात्र मल्ल राज्यहरू विजय गर्न त्यति सजिलो नदेखी उपत्यकालाई चारैतिरबाट आर्थिक नाकाबन्दी गर्ने योजना बनाए। यसअनुसार उपत्यकाका महत्त्वपूर्ण प्रदेशहरू आफ्नो कब्जामा लिने क्रममा वि.सं. १८०७ मा टिस्टुङ, चितलाङ् तथा दहचोक (पन्त र अरू, वि.सं. २०२५, पृ. ७७१) र वि.सं. १८१६ मा शिवपुरी विजय गरेका थिए (ऐजन्, पृ. ७७२)। यिनी कुनै पनि प्रदेशमा आक्रमण गर्नु अगाडि त्यहाँको प्रजापंचको जनमत अर्थात् अवस्थाबारे जानकारी लिन्थे (ऐजन्, पृ. १०२४-१०२५)। त्यसताका यिनै प्रजापंचले आक्रमण तथा प्रत्याक्रमणमा सहभागी हुनुपर्दथ्यो। यस्तो अवस्थामा पृथ्वीनारायण शाहले कतै समर्थन पाएको देखिन्छ भने कतै विश्वासघात र विरोधको सामना गर्न परेको उदाहरण पाइन्छ (ऐजन्, पृ. १००३, १००४)। टोखाले वि.सं. १८२२ जेठमा कुनै प्रतिकार नगरी पृथ्वीनारायण शाहसँग मिल्न गएकोले कान्तिपुर राज्यअन्तर्गतको यो टोखा प्रदेश गोरखा अधिराज्यमा बिलिन भएको पाइन्छ।

अन्ततः टोखा सांस्कृतिक दृष्टिले मात्र महत्त्वपूर्ण प्रदेश नभई यो एउटा सांग्रामिक दृष्टिले पनि उत्तिकै महत्त्वपूर्ण स्थल थियो। मध्यकालको पूर्वाद्धका विभिन्न समयमा घटेका घटनाहरूबाट टोखा बिद्रोहिहरूको शरणस्थलको रूपमा पनि प्रसिद्ध भएको देखिन्छ।

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गुरु धनवज्र वज्राचार्य प्रति श्रद्धाञ्जलीको रूपमा उहाँकै “मल्लकालको ऐतिहासिक सामग्री: धरःपौ”

चुन्दा वज्राचार्य

स्व. गुरु धनवज्र वज्राचार्यलाई वि.सं. २०४० मा भेट्ने अवसर प्राप्त भएको थियो। नेपालभाषा विषयको पनि विद्यार्थी भएको नाताले उहाँले मलाई मध्यकालको इतिहासका ऐतिहासिक सामग्रीहरूको अध्ययन अनुसन्धान गर्नतर्फ आकर्षित गर्नु भएको थियो। ताडपत्र, नीलपत्र, अभिलेख, ध्यासफू आदि जस्ता त्यसबेलाका प्रचलित ऐतिहासिक सामग्रीहरूको अध्ययन गराउनुको सट्टा त्यसताकासम्म एक दुई जना इतिहासकारहरूले मात्र महत्त्व दिएका तर अझै राम्रोसित अध्ययन अनुसन्धान नगरिएका ऐतिहासिक सामग्री “धरःपौ” को अध्ययन गर्न लगाउनु भयो। आफ्नै निर्देशनमा आज भन्दा २६-२७ वर्ष अघि उहाँलेनै धरःपौ को आधारमा नै श्री ५ वीरेन्द्र वीर विक्रम शाहदेवको शुभ विवाहोत्सवको उपलक्ष्यमा गोरखापत्रको विशेषाङ्कमा “साहित्य, संगीत र कलाको अभिवृद्धिमा राजकीय विवाहोत्सवको प्रभाव” शिर्षकमा लेख लेख्नु भएको थियो। (गोरखापत्र: २०२६:१६ फाल्गुण) उहाँको निर्देशनमानै मैले नेपाल राष्ट्रिय अभिलेखालयमा दुई तीन वर्ष लगाएर सो खोजें र ल.नं. २२५५ चौथो नम्बरमा उक्त धरःपौ फेला पारें। अभिलेखालयमानै केही दिन अध्ययन गरी सकेपछि मेरो ध्यान धरःपौ अध्ययनतिर लागेको बज्राले गुरु धनवज्रचार्यले तत्कालीन नेपाल तथा एशियाली अनुसन्धान केन्द्रका कार्यकारी निर्देशक प्रो. माधवराज पाण्डेज्यू समक्ष केन्द्रद्वारानै परियोजना सन्चालन गरी अध्ययन गराउने राय व्यक्त गर्नु भयो र एक वर्षपछि परियोजना सन्चालन गर्ने स्वीकृति पनि दिलाउनु भयो। सो अनुसार उक्त धरःपौलाई देवनागरीमा सम्पादन गर्नुको साथै आर्थिक, सामाजिक, भाषिक, धार्मिक, ऐतिहासिक पक्षले विश्लेषण गरी केन्द्रमा बुझाएको थिएँ। पछि निर्देशकहरूको पटक पटक नयाँ आउने जाने क्रमले गर्दा मध्यकालीन इतिहासमा प्रकाश पार्ने यस ग्रन्थको प्रकाशन तर्फ कसैको ध्यान गएन। फलस्वरूप उक्त ग्रन्थको यति धेरै ऐतिहासिक महत्त्व हुँदा हुँदै पनि हालसम्म अप्रकाशित रह्यो।

नेपाल र एशियाली अनुसन्धान केन्द्रद्वारा सन्चालित नेपालको वृहत् राष्ट्रिय इतिहास निर्माण कार्यमा मैले “मध्यकालीन ऐतिहासिक सामग्री संकलन” परियोजना सन्चालन गरेकी थिएँ। सो क्रममा राष्ट्रिय अभिलेखालय स्थित मध्यकालीन ऐतिहासिक सामग्रीको रूपमा रहेका धरःपौ मध्ये “जिन्तामित्र मल्लको पालाका धरःपौ”, “भूपतीन्द्र मल्लले भ्रमण

गरेको घरःपौ,” “भूपतीन्द्र मल्लले वनेपामा क्वाठ निर्माण गरेको घरःपौ,” रणजीत मल्लको विवाहका घरःपौ” भक्तपुरको न्यातपोल देवल निर्माण गरेको घरःपौ आदि सम्पादन गरी ऐतिहासिक, सामाजिक, आर्थिक, भाषिक पक्षले विश्लेषण गरेकी थिएँ। ती घरःपौहरू देखेर स्व. धनवज्र वज्राचार्य धेरै प्रभावित हुनु भएको थियो।

इतिहास निर्माणमा घरःपौ को महत्त्व बारे जानकारी दिन आज भन्दा ११ वर्ष अगाडि (वि.सं. २०४१ सालमा) राष्ट्रिय अभिलेखालयमा प्राप्त भएका ल.नं. २२५५ चौथोको “घरःपौ” ग्रन्थवारे एउटा लेख लेख्न मलाई गुरु धनवज्र वज्राचार्यले भन्नु भएको थियो। त्यसैवेला ‘घरःपौ’ मा उल्लेख भएका मुख्य मुख्य कुराहरू समावेश गरेर एउटा सानो लेख लेखेर दिएकी थिएँ। उक्त लेख उहाँले हेरेर नेपाल र एशियाली अनुसन्धान केन्द्रको उहाँकै कार्यालय कोठामा राख्नु भएको थियो। पछि उक्त लेख पत्रिकामा छाप्नको लागि निकाल्दा सो लेखको पाण्डुलिपि विचैमा मुसाले खाई दिएको थियो। उक्त मुसाले खाएको पाण्डुलिपि उहाँले देखाएर भन्नु भयो “घरःपौ सम्बन्धी ऐतिहासिक महत्त्व बारे जनसमक्ष प्रकाश पारौं भनेको त मुसाले खाइदिएछ। नानीलाई नराम्रो लाग्यो होला” भन्दै वडो अपठ्यारो मानेर फिर्ता गर्नु भयो। पुनः लेखेर ल्याउनु भन्न समेत उहाँले अपठ्यारो मान्नु भयो। मुसाले खाएको उक्त पाण्डुलिपि उहाँले दिनु भएकै अवस्थामा मसँगै जस्ताको त्यस्तै छ। आज त्यहि लेख ११ वर्ष पछि उहाँकै सम्भनामा उहाँलाई नै श्रद्धांजलिको रूपमा चढाउँदै छु। मुसाले खाएका खाली ठाउँहरूमा सकेसम्म सम्भेर सोही मिलानको सामग्री राख्ने कोशीस गरेकी छु।

भूमिका

मल्लकालको इतिहासका श्रोतहरूमा अभिलेख, ताडपत्र, ताम्रपत्र, नीलपत्र, ट्यासफूजस्ता हस्तलिखित ग्रन्थहरू आदि प्रमुख छन्। ती बाहेक अन्य महत्त्वपूर्ण, प्ररमाणिक र सामग्री घरःपौ हुन्। विशेष गरेर सामाजिक, आर्थिक, धार्मिक, साँस्कृतिक इतिहास तयार पार्ने काममा तात्कालिक ‘घरःपौ’ को ठूलो महत्त्व छ।

“घरःपौ” लेख्ने परम्परा विशेष गरेर नेपाल उपत्यका भित्रका साँस्कृतिक परम्परा पछि सम्म कायमै रहोस भन्ने धारणाले भएको हो। दरवार भित्र सम्पन्न हुने विवाह, व्रतवन्ध, चूडाकर्म, अन्नप्राशन, जन्मोत्सव, दीक्षा, विभिन्न जात्रा चाडपर्व र उत्सवहरू देवीदेवताहरूको मन्दिर निर्माण, क्वाठ निर्माण, देवीदेवताहरूको पूजा, यज्ञ आदि कार्यहरूमा आवश्यक पर्ने सबै सरसामान आदि सबको विस्तृत विवरणात्मक सूचि “घरःपौ” मा टिपिएका पाइन्छन्। साथै किल्ला, फल्चा, पाटी-पौवा, देवीदेवताहरूको निर्माण, स्थापना इत्यादिका तिथि मिति सहित सूचि पनि घरःपौमा टिपिएका पाइन्छन्।

ल.नं. २२५५ चौथो घरःपौको सामान्य परिचय

पत्र संख्या १८९ भएको पत्र पत्र छुट्टिएको प्रक्रीर्णको घरःपौमा ग्रन्थको र ग्रन्थकारको नाम उल्लेख नभएको तर तीन जना व्यक्तिका हस्तलिखित भएको, ने.सं. ७२४ देखि

ने.सं. ८१९ सम्मको तिथिमिति भएको, भक्तपुरको विशेष गरी सुमति जितामित्र मल्लको राज्यकालका घटनाहरू टिपोट गरिएका छन्। शंकरमान राजवंशीज्युका लेखहरू “भक्तपुरका मल्ल राजासँग सम्बन्ध राख्ने धरःपौ (लगत)” (पूणिमा, ४:१) र भक्तपुरका मल्ल राजासँग सम्बन्ध राख्ने धरःपौ (लगत) का केही ऐतिहासिक सारांश,” (पूणिमा: ४:४) मा उल्लेख भएका आकार प्रकार र विषयवस्तुहरू र राष्ट्रिय अभिलेखालय स्थित ल.नं. २२५५ चौथोको धरःपौ हेर्दा वेगलावेग्लै प्रति धरःपौ नभइ एउटै धरःपौ ग्रन्थ दुई ठाउँमा परेको अनुमान हुन्छ। शंकरमान राजवंशीज्युले उक्त धरःपौ ग्रन्थ वारे लेख लेख्नु भई सामग्रीको श्रोतको रूपमा साभार कवि सिद्धिचरण ज्यु प्रति आभार प्रकट गर्नु भएको थियो। उक्त ग्रन्थ अध्ययनका लागि म कविज्यु कहाँ धेरै पटक गएको थिएँ। तर उहाँले आफ्नो घरमा उक्त धरःपौ ग्रन्थ अरू पत्र पत्रिका र पुस्तकहरूका साथले घरकै छिडिमा राख्नु भएकोमा आफैले पछि ती पुस्तक र पत्रपत्रिकाहरू रासमा खोज्दा उक्त धरःपौ पेला पार्नु सक्नु भएन।

धरःपौको अध्ययनबाट उपलब्ध थप ऐतिहासिक जानकारी तथा अन्य विशेषताहरू:

(क) समति जीता मित्र मल्लको मृत्यु: धेरै जसो इतिहासकारहरू जितामित्र मल्लको मृत्यु ने.सं. ८१६ मा भएको दावी गरेर इतिहास लेख्ने गर्नुहुन्छ। इतिहासकार डिल्ली रम्ण रेग्मीज्युको Medieval Nepal Vol. II मा Jitmitra Malla died on Bhadra Vadi 11 of 816 (Regmi: 1966:232) भनेर लेख्नु भएको थियो भने/सूर्य विक्रम ज्ञवालीज्युको नेपाल उपत्यकाको मध्यकालीन इतिहासमा “जितामित्र मल्लको मृत्यु ने.सं. ८१६ वा त्यसको केही अघि भएको अनुमान हुन्छ किनभने सोही सम्बत्मा यिनका छोरा भूपतीन्द्र मल्लको मोहर प्राप्त भएको छ” (ज्ञवाली, २०१९:१०८) भनेर लेख्नु भएको थियो। जितामित्र मल्लको मृत्यु ने.सं. ८१६ मा भएको थिएन त्यसबेला उनी जिउँदै थिए भन्ने तथ्य नबिर्सनका लागि स्व. भिमनिधि तिवारीज्युले ‘राजा भूपतीन्द्र’ भन्ने एउटा पूर्णकी नाटक लेखी त्यस्को प्रस्तावनामा यसरी लेख्नु भएको थियो। “..... जितामित्र मल्ल ने.सं. ८२९, मार्ग महिनामा मरेका थिए। (ध्यासफू) ८१६ मा भूपतीन्द्र मल्ल बाबुको स्वर्गवास पछि राजा भएका होइनन्, बाबुले आफ्नै राजी खुशीले, पगरी र गद्दी दिएका हुनाले राजा भएका हुन्। त्यसपछि जितामित्र आफ्नो जीवन शान्त, साहित्यिक औ पारमार्थिक जीवन व्यतित गरेर थन्थु राजकुलमै (दरवारमै) बसेका थिए।” (तिवारी: २०२८: प्रस्तावना, ख) यस धरःपौमा उल्लेख भए अनुसार ने.सं. ८१९ जेष्ठसम्म जितामित्र मल्ल जीवित नै थिए र त्यसवेला धार्मिक कार्यमा लागेर यज्ञ गर्न लगाएको घटना धरःपौमा यस प्रकार उल्लेखित पाइन्छ-

“ने.सं. ८१९ जेष्ठ वदि १० श्री २ सुमति जय जितामित्र मल्ल देवनं थम सिद्धि होम याङ्गया थम चक्र उज्वलि॥ पूजा जु १,” (धरःपौ ४०६ (ख))

आफु जीवित छँदै छोराहरूलाई राजा बनाएर राज्य संचालन गराउने परम्परा सुमति जितामित्र मल्लको पालाको मात्रै थिएन। पाटनका राजा सिद्धिनरसिंह मल्ल र श्रीनिवास

मल्लले पनि आफ्नो छोरालाई राज्य सन्चालन गर्न लगाएर आफू अन्य कार्यमा लागेको देखिन्छ।

(ख) जितामित्र मल्लको जेठो छोरा: कुनै राजा पछि उन्को जेठो छोरा राजा हुने परम्पराअनुरूप भक्तपुरको वंशावली अनुसार जितामित्र मल्ल पछि भूपतीन्द्र मल्ल त्यहाँको राजा भएको देखिन्छ। भूपतीन्द्र मल्लको कुण्डलीमा पनि उनलाई जितामित्र मल्लको जेठो छोरा भन्ने देखाइएको छ (राजवंशी, २०३३:१६७)। तर धरःपौ का अनुसार भूपतीन्द्र मल्ल जितामित्र मल्लको जेठो छोरा थिएनन्। उनको जेठो छोरालाई ने.सं. ९७४ पौषमा फल प्राशन गराइएका थियो। जब कि भूपतीन्द्र मल्लको कुण्डली अनुसार भूपतीन्द्र मल्लको जन्म ने.सं. ७९५ कार्तिक महिनामा भएको थियो।

"श्री श्री जय जितामित्र मल्ल जुजुयो थाकुरजुया फलप्रासनया सम्वत् ७९४ पौष शुदि ५ थ्व कुन्हु याडा" (धरःपौ ९:ख)।

(ग) तिथिमितिको आधिक्य: ऐतिहासिक सामग्रीहरूमा तिथिमिति जति स्पष्ट हुन्छ त्यति महत्वपूर्ण प्रमाणिक, र बढीभरपर्दो हुन्छ। यस धरःपौमा एउटैमा १०७ वटा तिथिमितिहरू विशेष गरेर ने.सं. ७२४ देखि ने.सं. ८१९ भित्रका पाइन्छन्। तिथिमितिमा जितामित्र मल्लको राज्यकालको सबभन्दा बढि भेटिन्छन्। यी जितामित्र मल्ल, उग्रमल्ल, भूपतीन्द्र मल्ल, पद्मावती थकुनी, नन्दिनी, लालमती आदि व्यक्तिहरूको जीवनका घटनाहरू सम्बन्धमा चर्चा गरिएको छ।

मल्लकालीन सामाजिक संस्कारहरू:

जन्म उत्सव: हिन्दु समाजमा १६ संस्कार भन्ने चलन छ। जुन संस्कार मल्लकालमा मल्लराजाहरूले पनि मानेका थिए। धरःपौ अनुसारर देखा परेका संस्कारमा जन्मउत्सव फलप्राशन, अन्नप्राशन, चूडाकर्म, व्रतवन्ध, विवाह, दीक्षा आदि हुन्। ने.सं. ८०५, ८०६, ८०७ मा मनाइएका आफ्ना जन्मोत्सवमा जितामित्र मल्लले प्रत्येक पटक तीन तीन तोलाको सुनको नवग्रह बनाएर दान गरेको थिए। उक्त उत्सवमानै भक्तपुरको तलेजु चोकको ढोकामा सुनको जलप लगाएर तोरण पनि राखेको कुरा धरःपौमा देखापर्दछ। उक्त तोरण राखेको घटनाको विवरण अभिलेख संग्रहमा पनि देखा पर्दछ।

"नेपाल सम्वत् ८०५॥ शक १६०६ विक्रम १७४१ कलि ४७९५ मार्गशिर कृष्ण नवम्यां, चित्रानक्षत्रे सुकर्म्म योगे यथाकरणमुहुर्ते शनेश्चरवासरे धनुरासि गते सवितरि कन्याराशिगते चन्द्र मासि थ्व कुन्हु दुता जुर्नो॥" (अभिलेख संग्रह: ७:२८)

मार्ग कृष्ण नवमीको दिनमा जन्म-उत्सव मनाउने जितामित्र मल्लको ने.सं. ८०६ को जन्मोत्सव मनाउँदा जोगी र माग्नेहरूलाई भोज ख्वाइएको थियो भने ने.सं. ८०७ मा चाहिं १०० वटा गाईहरू दान गरिएको थियो। धरःपौ अनुसार ने.सं. ८०७ माघ शुदि सप्तमीको दिनमा पनि जन्मोत्सव मनाइएको देखिन्छ। तर उक्त जन्मोत्सव कस्को मनाइएको भन्ने कुरा स्पष्ट छैन।

फलप्राशनः ८४ परिकारका फलफूल राखी कलशपुजा, मतपूजा, जापूजा गरी ने.सं. ७९४ पौष शुदि ५ मा जितामित्र मल्लको थाकुरको फलप्राशन गरिएको थियो (धरःपौ ९ख)। हाल नेवार समाजमा लोप भएको संस्कार फलप्राशन र अन्नप्राशन त्यसवेला वेग्ला वेग्लै रूपमा गरेको देखिन्छ। हुन त अहिले पनि अन्नप्राशन गर्दा पहिले फलप्राशनको विधि सिध्याइसकेपछि अन्नप्राशन गराउने परम्परा नेवार समाजका केही जातिमा अहिले पनि यथावत् छ।

चूडाकर्मः मल्ल राजाहरूको चूडाकर्म र व्रतवन्ध छुट्टा छुट्टै रूपले गर्ने परम्परा थियो। धरःपौ मा ने.सं. ८०५ मा दुमाजु कहाँ भूपतीन्द्र मल्लका चूडाकर्म गरिएको थियो। यसरी चूडाकर्म गर्दा दुमाजुलाई सुवस्त्र, फनिनवस्त्र चढाइएको थियो भने चूडाकर्म गर्ने भूपतीन्द्र मल्ललाई लुगा र गहना पनि दिइएको थियो।

“सम्बत ८०४ फाल्गुण शुदि ५ आदित्यवार कुन्हु श्री श्री भूपतीन्द्र देवया चूडाकर्मया पिठि पूजा याता वसपे” (धरःपौः २४२ (ख))

व्रतवन्धः मल्लहरूको चूडाकर्म गरेको केही वर्षपछि व्रतवन्ध गर्ने प्रचलन थियो। भूपतीन्द्र मल्लको चुडाकर्म भएको दुई वर्ष पछि व्रतवन्ध सम्पन्न भएको थियो। “सम्बत ८०६ माघ वदि ५ श्री २ थाकुलजुया व्रतवन्धन-याया” (धरःपौ ३०५ ख) व्रतवन्धलाई ‘वुदान’ पनि भन्दछन्। व्रतवन्ध गर्दा ‘इनाप’ ‘एलि’, पूजा गरेर ल्याउने, फिर्ता गर्ने परम्परा थियो। दुमाजु कहाँ पन्चोवतार पूजा, ‘दुसर पूजा’ गरिन्थ्यो। भूपतीन्द्र मल्लको व्रतवन्ध गर्दा ३५ जना ब्राह्मणहरू कान्तिपुरबाट भक्तपुरमा आमन्त्रित गरिएको देखिन्छ। व्रतवन्धमा भाग लिन आउने व्यक्तिहरूमध्ये नृपेन्द्र मल्लकी रानी तथा प्रताप मल्लकी विधवा रानीका साथै कान्तिपुरको राजा लगायत विभिन्न व्यक्तिहरू भक्तपुर आइ लुगाहरू सहित भिक्षा दिएका थिए। भिक्षा दिँदा स्तर र दर्जा अनुसार हुन्थ्यो।

विवाहः मल्ल राजाहरूको विवाह प्रथामा वाल-विवाह, विधवा विवाह, पुनःविवाह, डोलाजी विवाहका साथै पारपाचुके गर्ने प्रचलन समेत थियो (वज्राचार्य २०३२:१०४)। राजकुमारहरूको विवाह विशेष गरेर १२।१३ वर्षको उमेरमा हुन्थ्यो। धरःपौ अनुसार भूपतीन्द्र मल्लको विवाह पनि उक्त उमेरमानै ने.सं. ८०८ कार्तिकतिर भएको थियो। उक्त विवाहको तयारी चाहिँ ने.सं. ८०७ को आषाढ देखिनै र खास गरी भाद्र महिनामा गरिएको थियो। विवाहमा आवश्यक पर्ने सरसामानको जोडजाम, रोटी पकाउने, काठमाडौँ, ललितपुरदेखि भक्तपुरका ठाउँठाउँबाट आर्थिक सहयोगको रूपमा भोजलाई चाहिने संरसमानहरूको ‘सेवा कु’ ल्याउन राज्यबाट अनुरोध भएको र उक्त अनुरोध अनुसार ‘सेवा कु’ पठाइएको विवरण पाइन्छ। “त्यस्तै भोज ढ्वाउनको लागि विभिन्न अधिकारीहरूलाई विशेष जिम्मेवारी सुम्पिएको थियो।” जस्तै पेय र पदार्थको जिम्मा लिने अधिकारी ‘ति भादिल’, चिउराको ‘वजि भादिल’ दहीको ‘धरी भादिल’, भाँडाकुँडाको ‘वसुजात भादिल’ आदि।

'सेवा कु' को लागि दरवारबाट 'मेलु'लाई चिठ्ठी लेखेर पठाइएको थियो। त्यो चिठ्ठी अनुसार नै केही फरक बदलगरी 'सेवा कु' हरू पठाइएको थियो। "शुभ विचाल ॥ श्री २ सुमति जय जितामित्र मल्लदेवसन मेलुयाके खं धुवते श्री थाकुलजुस ऐहयाता सेवाकु सम्बत ८०७ भाद्र शुदि १३ "धेनके माल" सो अनुसार काठमाडौँबाट भाद्रमै पठाइएको थियो। "ने.सं. ८०७ भाद्र वदि १ श्री २ थाकुलजु ऐहयाता यथा सेवा कु काया।"

भूपतीन्द्र मल्लको विवाह वाहेक धरःपौमा एकजना राजकुमारीको विवाह भएको विवरण पनि पाइन्छ। राजकुमारीको विवाह गर्दा सिंगार पटार गरेर 'भमल जात्रा' भनेर दुलहीलाई प्रदर्शित गर्ने चलन थियो। विवाहमा सिन्दुर हाल्ने बेलामा दुलहीलाई रातो कपडा राख्ने चलन थियो।

दीक्षा: मल्ल राजाहरूले राजगुरू वा अन्य जान्ने गुरू पुरोहितबाट शुभ दिनको शुभ साइतमा दीक्षा लिने परम्परा थियो। विशेष गरी ग्रहण लागेको वेलामा लिएको यस्तो दीक्षा बढि प्रभावकारी मानिन्थ्यो। त्यसमा पनि सूर्य ग्रहण भयो भने अफ राम्रो सम्झिइन्थ्यो। यसै परम्परा अनुसार भूपतीन्द्र मल्लले ने.सं. ८०८ कार्तिक औंशीमा लागेको सूर्यग्रहणमा दीक्षा लिएका थिए। दीक्षा लिंदा मन्त्र सुनाउने पुरोहितलाई विभिन्न वस्तु र धनराशि दान गरिन्थ्यो। धरःपौमा भूपतीन्द्र मल्लले दीक्षा लिएको पूर्ण विवरण पाइएको छ। "सम्बत ८०८ कार्तिक आश्विन वदि १५ श्री भूपतीन्द्र मल्लया दीक्षा याता" (धरःपौ, ३८६ क)। त्यस्तै ने.सं. ७९६ जेष्ठ महिनामा लागेको सूर्य ग्रहणमा सुमति जितामित्र मल्ल र उनका भाई उग्रमल्लले संयुक्त रूपमा दीक्षा लिएका थिए। उक्त दीक्षामा विभिन्न ठाउँबाट सरसामानहरू करको रूपमा बोकाहरू र नगद उठाइएको थियो। "ने.सं. ७९६ जेष्ठ वदि १५ दिक्षान दुगु काया दिना" (धरःपौ, ३८८ ख)

कर्मकाण्ड, उत्सव आदि मनाउँदा दरवारमा नै विभिन्न व्यक्तिहरूलाई बोलाएर भोज खाउने चलन थियो तर उक्त भोजको लागि आवश्यक पर्ने सरसामान 'सेवा कु' को रूपमा नगद र जिन्सी विभिन्न ठाउँहरू र व्यक्तिहरूबाट संकलन गरिन्थ्यो।

तत्कालीन समाज

जातजाति र पेशा: मल्लकालमा नेवारहरूको जातीय विभाजन पेशागत आधारमा भएको र जातको नाम पनि पेशा अनुरूपनै नामाकरण गरिएको थियो। जस्तो तामाको काम गर्ने तमोट, पित्तलको काम गर्ने लिकमि, कांसको काम गर्ने कंसाकार, रोटी पकाउने मरिकमि, आदि। धरःपौमा निम्न वर्ग जातका कामी, दमाई, सार्की देखि पुरोहित वर्गका ब्राह्मणहरू समेतको उल्लेख पाइन्छ। दुई (दली) र कुमाइ ब्राह्मण नेपाल उपत्यका भित्र श्री ५ पृथ्वीनारायण शाह संगसंगै पसेका थिए भन्ने इतिहासकारको सामान्य भनाइ थियो (वज्राचार्य, २०३२:१७)। तर त्योभन्दा अगाडिका धरःपौमा यी जातहरू वसोवास गरेको मात्र नभइ राज्य सन्चालनको लागि यिनीहरूबाट आवश्यक 'सेवा कु' समेत लिइएको देखिन्छ। त्यस वाहेक लवत, राजा, कस्ट, मौचि, पहिल, साज आदि जातिहरू पनि देखिन्छन जस्को अस्तित्व हाल देखा पर्दैन।

मनोरन्जन: मल्ल कालमा मनोरन्जनको साधन विशेष गरी नाचगान थियो। दरबार भित्र यस्तो मनोरन्जनको लागि नासल चौकको व्यवस्था गरीएको थियो भने जनता जनार्दनको लागि टोल टोलको दोवाटोमा दवलीहरू बनाएको देखिन्छ। नाचगान विशेष गरेर राजपरिवारको विवाह, व्रतवन्ध, चूडाकर्म, देव देवलहरू स्थापना गरेर उत्सव आदि मनाउने बेलामा राज्य भित्रका र अन्य राज्यहरूबाट नाचहरू ल्याएर प्रतिस्पर्धात्मक ढंगले प्रदर्शन गरूइन्थ्यो र त्यसैको आधारमा पुरस्कार दिने चलन थियो। भूपतीन्द्र मल्लको विवाहको उपलक्ष्यमा ल्याइएका नाचहरू मध्ये प्रतिस्पर्धा गरेर कान्तिपुरको नाचलाई प्रथम पुरस्कारको रूपमा रु. २० प्रदान गरिएको थियो भने नादलबाट ल्याइएको नाचलाई ९ मोहर तथा ठिमी साँखु, गोल, चाँगु आदि ठाउँका नाचहरूलाई ६।६ मोहर दिइएको थियो। कम रकम पुरस्कार प्राप्त गर्नेमा नाला, पनौती आदि थिए।

धरःपौ अनुसार भूपतीन्द्र मल्लको विवाहमा 'मदालसा हरण' नामक नाटकको पनि प्रदर्शन भएको थियो। उक्त नाटक आफ्नो छोराको विवाहमा बाबु जितामित्र मल्लले आफै लेखेका थिए (गोरखापत्र २०२६: फाल्गुण १६)।

विभिन्न ठाउँहरूबाट नाचहरू ल्याउँदा बस्ने ठाउँ, खानपीन आदिको व्यवस्था आयोजकहरूले गरीदिन्थे।

देवी देवताहरू: मल्लहरूले तलेजु, दुमाजु, भीमसेन, गणेश, भैरव, भगवती, चण्डेश्वरी, तिलमाधव, वालकुमारी, इन्द्रायणी, चांगुनारायण, मानेश्वरी, वासुकी नागराजा, गुहेश्वरी, कुमारी आदि देवीदेवताहरू मानेको थाहै हुन्छ।

त्यसै गरी पूजाहरूमा नागपूजा, ब्रलिपूजा, पीठपूजा, थापूजा, सिन्हपूजा, जापूजा, घण्टास्नान पूजा, पहर पूजा, चापूजा, दुसर पूजा, मतपूजा, कलश पूजा, कोटल पूजा ब्राम्हण पूजा इत्यादि गर्ने गरेको उल्लेख पाइन्छ। यज्ञ गर्दा विशेष गरी अहोरात्रि, लक्षाहूति, भैरवाग्नि, जल, अश्वयज्ञ गर्ने प्रचलन दान, वेज्याहुति, सिद्धाग्नि, मांसाहुति आदि। पूजामा प्रयोग गरिने जलब्रनि भनेको सामान्यतः सर्वत्र सजिलैसंग नपाइने थियो। जस्तो किगाजल, समुन्द्रजल, पोखरीको जल, पानीपरेको जल, हिउँजल, झरनाको जल, दोभानको जल, दहको जल, जमिन मुनिको जल, आदि हुन्थ्यो। त्यस्तै पूजाको लागि प्रयोग गर्ने माटो पनि थरीथरीका हुन्थे जस्तो कि कमिलाले खनेको माटो, हात्तीको दाँतले उचालेको माटो, चारदोबाटोको माटो, सुँगुरको थुतुनोले खसेको माटो, गाई बसेको ठाउँको माटो, विष्णु क्षेत्रको माटो, जंगल पहाडमा खेतको मुसाले खनेको माटो, अग्नि होमको माटो, पोखरी, दोभान, आदिका माटोहरू प्रयोग संकलन गरी तिन्को पूजामा गर्ने परम्परा थियो।

ने.सं. ८०१ भाद्र शुक्ल चतुर्दशीको दिनमा जितामित्र मल्ल र उग्रमल्ल (मेलम्ह जुजु) ले अनन्त व्रत गरी सिध्याएका थिए भने ने.सं. ८०२ माघ शुक्ल चतुर्थी मंगलवारका दिन थुथुं राजकुलोमा भैरवाग्नि गरेका थिए। ने.सं. ८०४ वैशाख कृष्णपक्ष सप्तमीको दिन जितामित्र मल्लले १५० जना सन्यासीहरूलाई भोज खुवाएका थिए। ने.सं. ८०५ को विस्केट जात्रा भएको बेलासा श्री ३ इलिमास पूजा गरेका थिए।

पूजा गर्ने वेलामा राजा, रानी लगाएत सर्वसाधारण जनताहरू समेत एकै ठाउँमा वसेर गर्ने प्रचलन पनि रहेको पाइन्छ। जस्तो ने.सं. ८०९ श्रावण शुदि प्रतिपदाको दिन पुरवाहालमा तःवलि दिएका थिए। त्यस्तै ने.सं. भाद्र कृष्णपक्ष तृतियाको दिन जितामित्रको बहुला हात्तीको लागि शान्ति गराएका थिए। उक्त दुई कार्यमा राजा, रानी लगाएत सर्वसाधारण जनताहरू संगै वसेर पूजा गरेका थिए।

प्रतिस्थापन

धरःपौमा जितामित्र मल्लले ठाउँ ठाउँमा देवल पाटी, पौवा, तोरण गजूरहरू स्थापना गरेका टिपोटहरू पाइन्छन्। ने.सं. ८०१ वैशाख शुक्ल त्रयोदशीको दिन 'सनछि' मा ढुङ्गाको देवल बनाइएको थियो। ने.सं. ८०४ कार्तिक कृष्ण पक्ष एकादशीको दिन उक्त देवलमा देवता राखेर त्यसको भोलीपल्ट गजूर राखिएको थियो। ने.सं. ८०४ फाल्गुण कृष्ण पक्ष चतुर्दशीका दिन तलेजु भवानीको ढोकामा चाँदीको तोरण राखिएको थियो भने ने.सं. ८०५ मार्ग कृष्ण नवमीको दिन तलेजु चोकको दक्षिण दिशाको ढोकामा सुनको जलप लगाई तामाको तोरण राखिएको थियो।

आर्थिक अवस्था

धरःपौ त्यसवेलाको आर्थिक पक्ष अध्ययन गर्नको लागि महत्वपूर्ण र भरपर्दो सामग्री हो। राज्यको मुख्य पेशा, उद्योग, विनिमय प्रथा, राज्यले उठाउने कर, बजार-भाउ, नापतौल, मुद्राको प्रचलन, आदिको उल्लेख त्यसमा पाइन्छ। त्यसवेला नेपालको मुख्य पेशा कृषि नै थियो। धान, गहुँ, कोदो, मकै, तेलहन आदिको उत्पादन हुन्थ्यो। उत्पादन भएको वस्तुको केही अंश करको रूपमा राज्यलाई बुझाउनु पर्दथ्यो। दरवार भित्र कुनै उत्सव वा यस्तै कुनै कार्य गर्नु पर्‍यो भने एक दुई वर्षको लिनुपर्ने उत्पादन कर एकैचोटी सरकारलाई आवश्यक परेको वेलामा बुझाउनु पर्दथ्यो। जस्तो भूपतीन्द्र मल्लको विवाहमा जनताबाट लिइने कृषि उत्पादन कर दुई वर्षको एकै चोटी दरवारमा भित्र्याइएको थियो।

उद्योगको रूपमा सुन चाँदीका गरगहना, बनाउने धातुका भाँडाकुँडा बनाउने, ढुङ्गा तथा काठका मूर्ति र मालसामानहरू बनाउने, कपडा, बुन्ने, तेल बनाउने माटाका भाँडाकुँडाहरू बनाउने प्रमुख व्यवसायहरू रहेको पाइन्छ।

बजारमा विनिमय गर्न वस्तु विनिमय र मुद्राका साथै प्रचलन पनि देखापर्दछ। त्यस बेला विनिमयको लागि प्रचलन गर्ने मुद्राहरू विशेष गरेर डवल, मोहर, सुकी, र दाम थिए। पारिश्रमिकको रूपमा ज्याला दिँदा मुद्राको साथ साथै धान, चामल दिने प्रचलन पनि भएको पाइन्छ।

नाप तौलको सन्दर्भमा आढक, फं, त्यछि, कुलछि, पछि, अस्ता आदि अन्न भरेर नाने भाँडाहरूको प्रयोग हुन्थ्यो भने तौलमा धानी, त्यल, कुल, पैल, वगल, वागल, अयताछि, तोला, रत्ति आदि र कपडा जस्ता वस्तुको नाप गर्न, कुच्छी, चुल्ली, पाख, औगुल आदिको प्रयोग भएको देखिन्छन नेवार समाजमा अहिले पनि यी नापहरूको प्रचलन कायम छ।

त्यस बेलाको बजार भाउमा माटोको पाला एक भारीको दुई दाम, राँगो गोटाकोप्रति ९ डवल, तेल कुच्छि (दुईमाना) को २८ दाम, एउटा चाँदीको चुराको २ मोहर १ सुकी ७ दाम र क्यामखाडी कपडा २ धानको २ मोहर, १० दाम परेको देखिन्छ।

अस्थायी कर

दरवार भित्र आइ पर्ने विभिन्न प्रकारका अपरभट कार्यका लागि पर्ने खाँचो टार्नका लागि राज्यद्वारा विभिन्न ठाउँहरू र व्यक्तिहबाट अस्थायी कर उठाउने चलन थियो। यस प्रकारको कर जितामित्र मल्लले भूपतीन्द्र मल्लको विवाह, व्रतवन्ध, देवल स्थापनाका लागि तथा जितामित्र मल्ल र उग्र मल्लले संयुक्त रूपमा दीक्षा लिएको बेला र तलेजुको चौकमा तोरण राख्दा लिएका थिए। कर लिने ठाउँहरूमा वनेपा, पनौती, ठिमी, नगदेश, धुलिखेल, वोडे, श्रीखण्डपुर, चौकवाथ, साँगा आदि थिए। यस बाहेक पूर्वबाट पश्चिममा बसाई सर्ने आएका खस मगरहरू विशेष गरेर भक्तपुर राज्य क्षेत्र भित्र पर्ने ठाउँमा बसोवास गरी आएकाहरूबाट पनि उठाइएको थियो।

अस्थायी कर नगद र जिन्सी कुन रूपमा लिने भन्ने कुरा राजदरवारको आवश्यकता अनुरूप उठाउने गरिन्थ्यो। जस्तो भूपतीन्द्र मल्लको विवाहमा विभिन्न ठाउँहरूबाट नगद र जिन्सी दुवै उठाइएका थिए। त्यस्तै जिन्सी कर स्वरूप जितामित्र मल्लको दीक्षा, भूपतीन्द्र मल्लको व्रतवन्ध र विवाहमा भोज ख्वाउनु पर्ने भएकोले 'सेवा कु' को रूपमा भोजलाई चाहिने सर-सामान तथा तलेजु भवानीको चौकमा तोरण राख्ने बेलामा ठाउँ ठाउँबाट तामा करको रूपमा संकलन गरिएको थियो।

यस्तो 'सेवा कु' आफ्नो राज्य भित्रबाट मात्र उठाइने नभएर काठमाडौँ र ललितपुरबाट पनि भक्तपुरमा पठाइएको पाइन्छ।

अन्तर्राज्यीय संबन्ध

उपत्यका भित्रका राज्यहरू ललितपुर र कान्तिपुरसँग भक्तपुरको आर्थिक, सामाजिक, धार्मिक सबै प्रकारको रूप संबन्ध रहेको तथ्य घर-घरैमा देखापर्दछ। त्यस बाहेक भक्तपुरको सम्वन्ध गोरखा, नुवाकोट सम्म रहेको देखिन्छ। ने.सं. ८०६ मा गोरखा र नुवाकोट बीच भगडा हुँदा उपत्यका भित्र सम्झौता गराइएको थियो।

“सं ८०६ पौष वदि ७ गा देश मेटजुव दिन ॥ गाइवादि वा संग्राम जुया नक्वाकोट” (घर:पौ २९३ ख)

उपरोक्त सम्झौतामा चामल, फलफुल, राँगो, बोका र सुँगुर खानपीनका लागि राखिएका थिए।

मल्लकालीन काठमाडौँ उपत्यका भित्रका विभिन्न राज्यहरूका राजाहरू र राजपरिवारहरू बीच अथवा राजा र प्रजाहरू बीच अथवा प्रजा र प्रजाबीच पनि विभिन्न प्रकारका संपर्क र अंतर्क्रियाहरू हुने गर्दथे। व्यक्तिगत, पारिवारिक अथवा समुदायगत विभिन्न सामाजिक, साँस्कृतिक र धार्मिक अनुष्ठान वा समारोहका अवसरहरूमा राजा,

राज परिवार भाइ भाइदार, कामदार, ब्राह्मण, जोगी मगन्तेहरू समेत सबैले आफ्नो जातिगत, पेशागत र आर्थिक हैशियत अनुरूप भेट कोसेली, सीधा सामल, दान दक्षिणा, पेशागत शीप र शिल्पको सहयोग इत्यादिद्वारा उक्त अवसरमा शरीक भै आफ्नो उत्तर दायित्व निर्वाह गर्नु पर्दथ्यो। तलेजु तोरण बनाउँदा कान्तिपुरबाट लिक्मी, सिकमी, तमोट आदि कामदारहरू भक्तपुर गएका थिए। त्यस्तै भूपतीन्द्र मल्लको विवाहमा कान्तिपुरको राजा, राजदरवार र जनताहरूबाट वेग्ला वेग्लै नाच भक्तपुर लगिएका थिए।

खानपीन

मल्लकालमा दरवार देखि लिएर सर्वसाधारण जनताहरू समेत थरी थरीका खाना परिकारहरू बनाएर खान्थे। त्यसमा पनि एउटै जन्तुका विभिन्न अंगको मासुलाई हिँला, पँला, तकुला, लापी, लागो, लाओ, चुँला, हामोला आदि विभिन्न किसिमका परिकारहरू बनाएर खान्थे। हाँस, राँगो, बोका, हरिण, परेवाको मासु जस्तै त्यसवेला राजपरिवारका सदस्यहरू देखि ब्राह्मण भाँदिल, सुवाल आदिले सहज रूपमा सुँगुरको मासु खाएको धरःपौमा देखिन्छ। भूपतीन्द्र मल्लको व्रतवन्धमा विभिन्न व्यक्तिहरूलाई मासु वितरण गर्ने सिलसिलामा ब्राह्मण, भाँदिल, सुवाल आदिलाई सुँगुर, राँगो, बोका, हाँस आदिको मासु वितरण गरिएको विवरण पाइन्छ। त्यस्तै जितामित्र मल्लले ललितपुर र भक्तपुरका ब्राह्मणहरूलाई भोज ख्वाउने धरःपौको विवरणमा सुँगुरको मासु पनि समावेश गरेको पाइन्छ।

“फल १ फाला, म्हं २ फा, म्हं ८ मेश, म्हं ७ चालेस, म्हं ७ फसि, म्हं ४ दुगु”
“फायासे, फाया सो, फाया ढाक काले” (धरःपौ ३-८६ ‘ख’)

भूपतीन्द्रमल्लको विवाहको लागि विभिन्न ठाउँबाट ल्याइएका ‘सेवा कु’ मा अरू खानाहरूको साथै सुँगुर र सुँगुरको मासु पनि समावेश गरेको पाइन्छ।

त्यस्तै जितामित्र मल्ल र उग्र मल्लले संयुक्त रूपमा दीक्षा लिएको वेलामा पनि पनौतिबाट फाचा म्हं १ (सानो सुँगुरको सापारा २) राखेर सेवाकु ल्याइएको थियो। मल्ल राजाहरूले सुँगुरको मासुको प्रचलन गरेको प्रमाण धरःपौमा मात्र नभै अन्य पुस्तकहरू र थ्यासुफूमा पनि उल्लेख भएको पाइन्छ (Regmi, III, 1966:72)।

धरःपौले त्यसवेला खानेकुरा विशेष गरेर साँस्कृतिक परम्परा अनुसार रोटी ख्वाउने, उपहार दिने, भेटी दिने आदिको उल्लेख गरेको पाइन्छ। त्यस्तै दूध, पन्चामृत देखि लिएर कताथ्वं, ह्याउंथ्वं अजि थ्वं, काल थ्वं जस्ता जाँड, रक्सीका प्रकारहरू पनि देखापर्दछन्।

भाषा

धरःपौ ग्रन्थ विशेष गरेर भाषिक पक्षबाट हेर्ने हो भने यसमा नेपालभाषाका विभिन्न नामहरू पाइन्छ। नेपाल भाषाको विशेषता भनेको नाम अनुसार संख्या गन्दा खेरी आउने नाम विशेषण (Classifying Words) हुन्। त्यस प्रकारका Classifying Words प्रशस्त देखापर्दछन्। जुन धेरै जसो अहिलेको नेपाल भाषामा पनि प्रयोग भैरहेका छन्। प्रायिवाचक,

अप्राणिवाचक, समुहगत, आकार प्रकार अनुसार प्रयोग हुने, लम्वाई, नाप तौलमा प्रयोग हुने प्रशस्त शब्दहरू पाइन्छन्। कम मात्र वाक्य र वाक्यांशहरूको प्रयोग भएको पाइन्छ।

निष्कर्ष

मध्यकालको इतिहास र संस्कृतिको जुनसुकै पक्षको अध्ययन गर्दा पनि घरःपौको ठूलो महत्त्व देखिन्छ। प्रस्तुत एउटा ल.नं. २२५५ चौथोको घरःपौबाट नै यति धेरै र बढी महत्त्व भएको कुरा प्रकाशमा आउँदछन् भने अझ बढि सुक्ष्म रूपले अध्ययन गरेर व्याख्या र विश्लेषण गरीयो भने हालसम्म प्रकाशमा नआएका मल्लकालका धेरै कुरामा प्रकाश पर्ने छन्। यसै कुरालाई गुरु धनवज्र वज्राचार्यज्यूले बुझी मलाई यस काममा लगाउनु भयो। साथै उहाँले नेपाल र एशियाली अनुसन्धान केन्द्रबाट नेपालको वृहत राष्ट्रिय इतिहास निर्माण गर्ने योजनामा मध्यकालको इतिहासको आर्थिक, राजनैतिक, सामाजिक र धार्मिक पक्ष बढि भन्दा बढि प्रामाणिक होस् भन्नाका लागि "मध्यकालको ऐतिहासिक सामग्री संकलनमा" घरःपौ माथि पनि जीउ दिनु भएको थियो।

यत्ति नै भनी म उहाँकै घरःपौ उहाँलाईनै श्रद्धाञ्जली स्वरूप चढाउँछु।

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प्राचीन नेपाली समाजमा नारीको स्थानः लिच्छविकालका अभिलेख नियाल्दा

सुशीला मानन्धर

श्रद्धेय श्री धनबज्र बज्राचार्यको लिच्छविकालका अभिलेख नेपालको प्राचीन इतिहासको एक महत्वपूर्ण श्रोत हो। संस्कृत पद्धत नजान्ने अनुसन्धानकर्ता, शिक्षक एवं विद्यार्थीवर्गलाई यस पुस्तकमा रहेको अनुवाद र व्याख्याले प्राचीन इतिहास र संस्कृति अध्ययनार्थ ठूलो योगदान पुऱ्याएको छ।

तत्कालीन शासक एवं विशिष्ट अधिकारीहरूबाट जारी गरिएका विभिन्न सनदपत्रहरू (स्थिति वन्देज), राजा, राजपरिवार लगायत विभिन्न व्यक्तिले राखेका धर्मकृति आदि समेत गरी जम्मा १९० वटा अभिलेखहरू यस ग्रन्थमा समावेश भएका छन्। ती मध्ये ४३ वटा अभिलेखहरू प्रत्यक्ष एवं अप्रत्यक्ष रूपमा नारीसंग सम्बन्धित छन्। यी अभिलेखहरूमा तत्कालीन नेपाली समाजमा नारीहरूका विविध स्थितिहरू (धार्मिक, शैक्षिक, राजनैतिक, आर्थिक आदि) माथि प्रकाश पारिएको छ।

यस पुस्तकमा अभिलेखका हरेक विषयवस्तुलाई ऐतिहासिक प्रमाण सहित व्याख्या गरी प्रष्ट पारिएको छ। तर ती संपूर्ण अभिलेखहरूको समुच्चै अध्ययन गरी क्रमवद् इतिहास लेख्ने लक्ष भन्ने बज्राचार्यको रहेको थिएन। सोही समष्टिगत स्वरूपको अध्ययनको अभावको पूर्ति गर्ने प्रयासमा यस पुस्तकमा समाविष्ट सामग्री (अभिलेखहरूको अनुवाद र व्याख्या एवं पूर्ण प्रकाशित इतिहास) को विश्लेषण र समालोचना गर्ने प्रयास यस लेखमा गरिएको छ।

पारिवारिक सम्बन्ध र नारी

समाजमा नारीको स्थानको उल्लेख गर्दा परिवार एवं व्यक्तिको रूपमा नारी र पुरुषको के कस्तो स्थान छ त्यो उल्लेख गर्न जरूरी छ। बज्राचार्यले विभिन्न अभिलेखहरूको व्याख्या गर्ने क्रममा तत्कालीन समाजमा नारीको स्थिति धेरै उच्च नभए पनि त्यति साह्रै गिरेको पनि थिएन भन्ने सिद्ध गर्ने प्रयास गरेका छन्।

समाजमा आपसी हार्दिक संबन्धको ठूलो महत्त्व रहेको हुन्छ। तत्कालीन समाजमा राजा र जनता बीचको सम्बन्ध शासक र शासितको नभई पिता र पुत्रको (बज्राचार्य, २०३०: ९५) जस्तो हार्दिक थियो। त्यस्तै पति र पत्नीका बीच अगाध प्रेम, सन्तान प्रतिको माया र ममता, आमाबाबु प्रति अगाध भक्ति एवं मर्यादा तथा संपूर्ण प्राणीहरूप्रति नै स्नेहको

भावना राख्ने सामान्य चलन रहेको कुरा विविध अभिलेखहरूबाट पुष्टि हुन्छ। समाजमा आमाबाबु प्रति सम्मान र आदर गर्ने चलन रहेको कुरा केहि अभिलेखहरूले स्पष्ट पारेका छन्। जस्तै: संबत् ४२७ मा निरपेक्ष भन्ने व्यक्तिले आफ्ना आमा बाबुको सालिक स्थापना गरी त्यसबाट प्राप्त पुण्यले स्वर्गीय आमाबाबुको अर्को जन्ममा पुनः मिलन होस् भन्ने कामना गरेका थिए (बज्राचार्य २०३० अभिलेख सं. १९: ७९-८१)। परमोपाशक मनिगुप्तले पत्नी समेत भई आफ्ना आमाबाबु लगायत सकल प्राणीको हित चिताई आर्यावलोकितेश्वर स्थापना गरेका थिए (अ. ४०: १७७-७८)। त्यस्तै मानदेवकी छोरी तर्फका छोरा भारवीले आमाबाबुको पुण्य बढोस् भनि मंगलवजारको प्रसिद्ध धारा स्थापना गरेका थिए (पृ. ५२: २०८-२१०)। पतिव्रता देशतारीकाले आफ्ना काका वभु वर्माको अनन्तकाल सम्म स्वर्गमा बास होस् र आमाबाबु पति एवं आफ्नो समेत पुण्य बढोस् भनि मातृकागणको जीर्णोद्धार गरेका थिए (अ. ५३: २११-२१३)। धर्मपालकी मुख्य भित्रिणी मृगिणीले आमाबाबु र पति सहित सकल प्राणीको दुःख निवारण र मोक्षको कामना गरी आर्याभिक्षुणीसंघलाई गुठी दान गरेकी थिइन् (अ. ९५: ३८२-३८३)। भिक्षु वन्धुभद्रले आमाबाबु लगायत सकल प्राणीको लागि दान धर्म गरेका थिए (अ. १२१: ४५६)। विष्णुवर्मले मातापिता लगायत संपूर्ण प्राणीको पुण्यको लागि जलद्रोणी स्थापना गरेका थिए (अ. १६९: ५८६)।

मानदेवले आफ्नी आमाको पुण्य वृद्धिको लागि (अ. ५: ३५-३८) विष्णुको मूर्ति स्थापना गरेबाट उनी आमाप्रति पूर्ण सम्मान गर्थे भन्ने देखिन्छ। त्यस्तै जयदेवले प्रशुपतिलाई ८ पत्रे चाँदीको कमल चढाई त्यसको पुण्य आमाप्रति समर्पण गरेका थिए (अ. १४८: ५५५-५९)। मंगलवजारको धारामा "माता . . . " (अ. १८४: ५९६-९७) उल्लेख भएको छ।

मानदेवकी पत्नी गुणवतीले शिवलिङ्ग स्थापना गरी आफ्ना स्वर्गीय पिता किन्नरवर्मामा समर्पित (अ. १५: ६५-६६) गरेबाट उनी बाबुप्रति निकै श्रद्धा राख्दथे भन्ने देखिन्छ। त्यस्तै जयसुन्दरीले पनि आफ्नो बुबा र आफ्नै कल्याणको कामना गरी धारा जीर्णोद्धार गराएका थिए (अ. २६: १३२-१३४)।

नारीहरूले आफ्नो धर्मकर्मको फल आमाबाबुप्रति मात्र नभै आफ्ना पति र सन्तानको पुण्यको लागि पनि समर्पण गरेका अभिलेखहरू पाइन्छन्। माथि उल्लेखित केही अभिलेखहरूका अतिरिक्त निम्न अभिलेखहरू उदाहरणको लागि लिन सकिन्छ। छोरा जयदेवले आफूलाई चढाएको पुण्य एवं आफूले गरेको धर्मको फल आफ्ना पतिप्रति समर्पण गरेको अभिलेख (अ. १४८: ५५५-५५६)। आभिरिले आफ्ना पतिको पुण्य बढोस् भन्ने कामना गरी छोराको अनुमति लिई दानधर्म लगायत अनुपरमेश्वर स्थापना गरेको तथा छोरा भौमगुप्त एवं अन्य सन्तानको सुखको कामना गरी उक्त देव मन्दिरमा नित्य पूजा एवं मर्मत संभारको लागि गुठी राखिदिएको अभिलेख (अ. ३८: १७०-७४)। एक रानीले पतिको पुण्य र आफ्नो मोक्षको कामना गरी कुनै देवता स्थापना गरेको अभिलेख (अ. ८७: ३६६-३६७) इत्यादि।

यतिमात्र नभई व्यक्तिगत प्रतिष्ठा एवं लोक हितको चाहनामा कतिपय नारीहरूले कृतिहरू राखेका उदाहरण पाइन्छन्। जस्तै: विजय स्वामिनीले विजयेश्वरी स्थापना गर्नु

(अ. १६: ६७-७०)। भोजमतिले स्थानिय वासिन्दाले सधै खान पाउनु भन्ने कामना राखी जलद्रोणी स्थापना गरी संभारार्थ गुठी राख्नु (अ. १४७: ५४७), जयवर्तिकाले..... छत्रफुल चढाई गुठी राख्नु (अ. ९०: ३७२-७३), कलहाभिमानी राजाकी विधवा भाई वुहारीले धारा स्थापना गरी गुठी राख्नु (अ. १४४: ४३१-३२), एक दयालु भिक्षुणीले प्राणीहितको कामना गरी जलद्रोणी स्थापना गर्नु (अ. १८१: ५९५-६) आदि।

माथि उल्लेखितमध्ये केही अभिलेखहरूको उल्लेख गर्दै पूर्व इतिहासकारहरूले समाजमा आमाबाबुको स्थान वरावर रहेको कुरा दावी गरेका छन्। यति मात्र नभई यी अभिलेखहरूले परिवारकै सम्बन्धलाई प्रष्ट पार्ने एवं समाजमा पारिवारिक बन्धनको निकै महत्व थियो भन्ने कुरा बुझिन्छ। जस्तै: भारवीको अभिलेखमा (अ. ४९: १७९-८१) मानदेवका छोरीका छोरा भनी प्रष्ट गरिएको छ। साथै कृतिहरू राख्दा आफ्नो निकटतम एवं प्रियतमको नाममा पुण्यानुमोदन गर्दथे। जस्तै मानदेव आमाको रेखदेखमा हुर्के र उनमा निकटतम रहे तसर्थ उनले आफ्नी आमाको पुण्य वृद्धिको लागि विष्णु विक्रान्त मूर्तिको स्थापना गरे। त्यस्तै जयदेवले आफ्ना धर्मको पुण्य आफ्नी आमाप्रति चढाए भने देशतारिकाले पुण्यानुमोदन गर्दा आफ्ना काका वभुवर्मा, पति, मातापिता र आफु समेतको पुण्य वृद्धिको कामना गरेको पाइन्छ। तसर्थ डा. हित नारायण भाले (Jha, 1970: 175) तत्कालीन महिलाहरू आफ्ना निकटतम प्रिय व्यक्ति र आफ्नै पुण्यको कामना गरी धार्मिक कृतिहरू र लोककल्याणकारी चन्दाहरू स्थापित गर्दथे भन्नुमा गल्ती देखिदैन।

एक अभिलेखमा आभिरिले आफ्ना पतिलाई "देवता" संबोधन गरेको कुरालाई लिएर कतिपय इतिहासकारहरूले नारीको स्थान पुरुषको भन्दा निकै गिरेको आशंका गरेका छन्। नेपाली समाजमा आफ्नो प्रिय व्यक्तिलाई हृदयेश्वर, हृदयेश्वरी, प्राणदेव, प्राणेश्वरी आदिबाट संबोधन गरी देव देवीको दर्जा दिने चलन हालसम्म प्रचलित छ। साथै हाल जस्तै त्यस समयमा पनि पति वा पत्नीको नामोच्चारण नगर्ने चलन रहेको अनुमान (बज्राचार्य, २०३०: १७१) गर्न सकिन्छ। यतिमात्र नभै त्यस अभिलेखमा "देवता हुनु भएका" भनि "मृत्यु भएका" भन्ने अर्थमा हाल पनि यो चलन छ। कारण त्यस अभिलेखमा "देवता" मात्र संबोधन गरेको नभै "देवता हुनु भएका" अर्थात स्वर्गवास भएका भन्ने वाक्यांश उल्लेख भएको पाइन्छ। त्यसैले यस अभिलेखले पतिलाई परमेश्वर मानेको ठान्नु उचित नहोला। बरु यी वाक्यांशले पारिवारिक सद्भावनालाई जनाउँछन्। यसरी तत्कालीन समाजमा पारिवारिक वा आपसी सम्बन्धको ठूलो महत्व रहेको बुझिन्छ। जस्तै कुनै व्यक्तिले पंचोपराध गरेमा सम्पूर्ण परिवारनै दण्डका सहभागी हुन्थे (अ. ४४८-४५१। अ. १३३: ४९६-९८) मानवीय एवं आपसी सद्भावनाले समाजमा ठूलो स्थान पाएको थियो। तसर्थ कसैले धर्मकृति राख्दा त्यसको फलबाट सम्पूर्ण प्राणीकै कल्याण होस् भनी कामना गरेको अनेकौ अभिलेखहरू पाइन्छन्।

बहुविवाह

विभिन्न अभिलेखहरूको अध्ययन गर्दा मानदेवका क्षेमसुन्दरी, गुणवती र भोगिनी गरी तीन पत्नीहरू थिए भन्ने स्पष्ट हुन्छ (अ. ६: ३९-४०। अ. १५: ६५-६६। अ. २०: ८२-

८४)। त्यस्तै भिक्षुणी संघका लागि जग्गादान दिने एक सम्पन्न नारी धर्मपालकी भित्रिनी थिइन् (अ. ९५: ३८२-८३) भन्ने पनि स्पष्ट बुझिन्छ। तसर्थ तत्कालीन समाजमा संपन्न कुल र राजपरिवारमा बहुविवाहको प्रचलन रहेको प्रष्ट हुन्छ। सर्व साधारणमा बहुविवाह प्रचलित थियो वा थिएन भन्ने उदाहरण पाइँदैन।

डोलाजि प्रथा

त्यस समय डोलाजि प्रथा थियो वा थिएन भन्ने कुरा कुनै अभिलेखबाट प्रष्ट हुँदैन। तर सुरसेन र भोगदेवीका (अंशुवर्माकी बहिनी) छोराले आफ्नो बाबुको "सेन" को सत्ता मावलि तर्फको "वर्मा" अर्थात् भोगवर्मा भनि परिचित गराएबाट (अ. ५८: ३६०) कतै सुरसेन डोलाजि त थिएनन् भन्ने प्रश्न उठ्छ। त्यसैले भोगवर्माले आफ्नो व्यक्तित्वको परिचय मावली तिरबाट दिएका त थिएनन् भन्ने आशंका गर्न सकिन्छ।

पुनर्विवाह

विष्णुगुप्तले संवत् ५७ मा 'कसैको पति हराएमा, मरेमा, जोगी भएमा, राजदण्ड पाएमा वा पतित भएमा पत्नीले पुनर्विवाह गर्न पाउने' पूर्व नियम कायम राख्दै (अ. ११६: ४३८-४४१) एक सनद जाहेर गरेका थिए। यस सनदमा पारपाचुकेको स्पष्ट व्यवस्था नभएतापनि विधवा विवाह र पुनर्विवाहलाई कानूनी मान्यता दिएको देखिन्छ। रेग्मीले (२०२६: ३४५) यो नियम उच्च वर्गमा लागु हुँदैन थियो कि भन्ने शंका गरेका छन्।

उच्च वर्गमा होस् वा निम्न वर्गमा यो नियम अनुसार पुनर्विवाह गर्न एक नारीको लागि निकै अप्ठेरो पर्ने देखिन्छ। कारण माथि उल्लेखित विविध अवस्थामा मात्र पुनर्विवाह गर्न पाउने हक दिएको देखिन्छ भने त्यस्तै अति अपठ्यारो स्थितिमा एक स्त्रीले पुनर्विवाह गरेको खण्डमा पनि उक्त नारीलाई "चरित्रहीन" मानिन्थ्यो। धेरै पल्ट विवाह गर्नेलाई "लाज पचाएको" अर्थात् "कामवासना लिप्त" को संज्ञा दिइन्थ्यो। साथै पुनर्विवाहबाट पनि निसन्तान भएमा कुनै विशेष मापचोक अड्डामा कर तिर्नु पर्दथ्यो (अ. ११६: ४३८-४४१)।

यसरी सो अभिलेखलाई राम्ररी विचार गर्ने हो भने एकातिर यसले नारीलाई पुनर्विवाहको हक कानूनीतवरले प्रदान गरेको जस्तो देखिन्छ भने अर्को तर्फ यसरी पुनर्विवाह गर्नेलाई चरित्रहीन ठान्ने मात्र नभई निसन्तान भएमा केही हदसम्म सरकारी कारवाहीमा समेत पर्ने व्यवस्था गरिएको छ। तसर्थ "... Though they (women) were enjoyed the right of divorce & remarry women described as characterless.." (Regmi, 1967:72) भन्नुमा सत्यता रहेको पाइन्छ। तसर्थ पुनर्विवाहलाई प्रोत्साहित गर्ने अभिप्राय यो नियमको देखिँदैन।

नारी संरक्षण.....?

भिमार्जुन र विष्णुगुप्तको संवत् ६४ को अभिलेख (अ. ११७: ४४२-४४७) र संवत् ६५ को त्यस्तै अर्को अभिलेख (अ. ११८: ४४८-४५१) अध्ययन गर्दा के प्रष्ट हुन्छ भने

लिच्छवि कालमा कसैले अन्य व्यक्तिको पत्नी माथि आँखा लगाएमा त्यसलाई पंचोपराध (पंच महाअपराध) मध्ये एक मानी सजाय दिइन्थ्यो। यस्तो अपराध गर्नेलाई मात्र नभई अपराधीका संपूर्ण परिवारलाई नै सजाय दिइन्थ्यो। यी अभिलेखहरूमा दुई निश्चित ईलाकाहरूका जनतालाई यस दण्डमा कटौती गरी अपराधीको निजी संपत्ति वाहेक अंशियारको संपत्तिमा सरकारको हक नलाग्ने गरिदिएका थिए।

त्यस्तै राजा नरेन्द्रदेवले संवत् १०३ मा आर्यभिक्षुसंघलाई एक गाउँ दान दिई त्यस्तै स्थितिवन्देज गरि दिएका थिए (अ. १३३: ४९६-४९८)। आफूले भिक्षुसंघलाई दान दिएको ईलाका भित्र वसोवास गर्ने कुनै व्यक्तिले पंचोपराध गरेको खण्डमा (..... अर्काकी स्वास्नी हेर्ने) अपराधीको शरिर राजदरवारको, उनको श्रीसंपत्ति र जहान वच्चा आर्यभिक्षुसंघको जिम्मा लाग्ने सनद गरिदिएका थिए। यस्तो कडा नियम हुँदा हुँदै संवन्ध विच्छेद विना एक नारीको पुनर्विवाह कतिको संभव हुन्थ्यो त्यो सोचनीय छ। यो सनदमा संवन्धविच्छेदको व्यवस्था कतै उल्लेख भएको छैन।

यी दुई अभिलेखहरूलाई सरसर्ती हेर्दा तत्कालीन समाजमा नारी संरक्षणको राम्रो व्यवस्था थियो भन्ने देखिन्छ। तर वास्तविक रूपमा यसले नारीको नभई विवाहित नारी माथि पतिको हक सुरक्षित गर्ने गरेको पाइन्छ।

अभिलेख १३३, १३४ र १४९ (पृ. ४९६-५०६। ५६२-७२) मा "..... यदि कुनै गर्भिणी महिलाको मृत्यु भएको खण्डमा सरकारी अधिकारी "दोवारिका" को अगाडी गर्भ भिकेर मात्र उनको दाहसंस्कार गर्न पाउने र सो गर्भ भिकेका मृतकका पति वा अभिभावकले १०० पण दस्तुर तिर्नु पर्ने व्यवस्था गरिएको छ। यसलाई हेर्दा गर्भवती नारीको सुरक्षा र हेरचाह राम्ररी गर्नु पर्ने व्यवस्था गरिएको हो कि भन्ने देखिन्छ। तर गहिरिएर अध्ययन गर्दा यहाँ नारीकोभन्दा बढी गर्भोद्धारको लागि महत्व दिएको पाइन्छ। किनकि स्थितिवन्देजमा गर्भवतीको मृत्यु भएकोमा कर तिर्नु पर्ने नभई गर्भ उद्धार गरेको मात्र तिरे पुग्ने कुरा स्पष्ट उल्लेख छ। यसरी यो गर्भ उद्धारार्थ बनेको नियम मान्न सकिन्छ, यसमा नारी संरक्षणको कुनै आभास पाइदैन।

सती प्रथा

चाँगुनारायण स्थित मानदेवको अभिलेख (अ. २: ९-३०) लाई औल्याएर प्राय संपूर्ण स्वदेशी एवं विदेशी इतिहासकारहरूले प्राचीनकालमा सतीप्रथा प्रचलित रहेको कुरा लेखेका छन्। तर त्यस शिलालेखको आठौँ, नवौँ र दशौँ श्लोकहरूलाई (अनुवाद: १५) अध्ययन गर्दा त्यसवेला सतीप्रथा सामाजिक संस्कारका रूपमा विद्यमान नभई पतिको मृत्युवाट उठेको विरक्तिका भावना मात्र हो कि जस्तो देखिन्छ। पतिको बिछोडको व्यथावाट मुक्ति पाउन राज्यवतीले पतिकै साथ प्राण त्याग गर्ने भाव व्यक्त गरेको छ भने राजकुमार मानदेवले पनि आफूले पहिले प्राण त्याग्ने कुरा व्यक्त गरेको पाइन्छ। यसरी धर्मदेवको मृत्युमा आमा छोरा अर्थात् राज्यवती र मानदेव दुवै सती जान खोजेको हुन् त? भन्ने प्रश्न उठ्न सक्छ। यदि हुन् भने नारीले मात्र नभई पुरुषले पनि सती प्रथा

पालन गर्नु पर्ने थियो त? वा ती वाक्यहरूले पारिवारिक संबन्धमा रहेको असीम प्रेम भाव प्रदर्शन गरेका मात्र हुन्?

अन्तमा राज्यवतीले प्राण त्याग नगरी शासन सम्हाल्न मानदेवको सहयोगी भै जीवन विताउने निर्णय (संस्कृत ११: १५) गरेकी थिइन्। यसरी त्यस समय सतीप्रथा सामाजिक नियम वा अनिवार्य संस्कारको रूपमा विद्यमान थिएन भन्ने प्रष्ट हुन्छ। यो एक अभिलेख वाहेक अन्य कुनै अभिलेखहरूमा पतिको मृत्युपछि पत्नीले प्राण त्याग गर्नु पर्ने कुराको उल्लेख गरेको पाइँदैन। राजपरिवार होस् वा सर्वसाधारण नारीहरूले विधवाको रूपमा पनि जीवन निर्वाह गरेको पाइँन्छ। उनीहरूले आ-आफ्नो गच्छेअनुसार आफ्नो वा आफ्नो निकटतम र प्रियतमका पुण्य कामना गरी विभिन्न धर्मकृति राखेको देखिन्छ। उदाहरणार्थ रानी वत्सदेवी (अ. १४८: ५५५-५५६), देशतारिका (अ. ५३: २११-२१३), आभीरी (अ. ३८: १७०-७४) आदि विधवाहरूले विविध धर्मकृति राखेका कुरालाई लिन सकिन्छ। यसरी एक अभिलेखको आधारमा तत्कालीन समाजमा सतीप्रथा थियो वा थिएन, भए कुन अवस्थामा थियो भन्ने प्रमाणित गर्न सकिँदैन। इसवी संवत्को उन्नाइसौ वीसौ शताब्दी ताकाका विभिन्न अभिलेखहरूले के प्रष्ट गर्छन् भने त्यसताका राजपरिवारमा यो प्रथा प्रचलित रहेको र ब्राम्हणवर्गमा यसको प्रचलन दुर्लभ रहेको थियो (Michaels 5, 1992: 29)। प्राचीन कालका अभिलेखहरू हेर्दा शासक वर्गमा पनि यसको प्रचलन सून्य रहेको पाइन्छ। नत यस प्रथालाई हतोत्साही गर्न सुरेन्द्र विक्रम शाहको ऐनमा जस्तो (२०२२ साल: ४२१-४२५) कानुनी व्यवस्था नै गर्नु परेको थियो। तसर्थ प्राचीनकालको सतीप्रथा सामाजिक नियम थिएन तर पतिव्रता भै वस्ने प्रचलन थियो भन्न सकिन्छ। कारण प्राय धेरै जसो कृतिहरूका पतिव्रता भै वस्ने प्रथाले गर्दा पुनर्विवाहको लागि भने नारीहरू पूर्ण स्वतन्त्र थिएनन् भन्ने प्रष्ट हुन्छ।

आर्थिक स्थिति

चर्चितकालमा केही नारीहरू आर्थिक दृष्टिले संपन्न थिए भन्ने कुरा तत्कालीन कृतिहरूबाट प्रष्ट गर्दछ। उनीहरू आफ्नो संपतिबाट धार्मिक एवं लोक कल्याणकारी कृत्याकलाप गर्न स्वतन्त्र थिए। साथै राजपरिवारका नारी मात्र नभई सर्वसाधारण एवं भित्रिनीहरूको समेत व्यक्तिगत संपति हुन्थ्यो भन्ने स्पष्ट बुझिन्छ। तर आभीरी नामक विधवाले आफ्नो पतिको पुण्य कामना गरी धर्मकीर्ति राख्दा छोराको अनुमति प्राप्त गरेको कुरालाई लिएर रेग्मीले (२०२६: ३४२-४३) तत्कालीन समाजमा विधवा नारीको आर्थिक स्वतन्त्रता माथि शंका व्यक्त गरेका छन्। कतिपय अन्य अभिलेखहरू हेर्दा सधवा होस् वा विधवा या भित्रिनी नै किन नहोस् कसैको अनुमति विना आ-आफ्नो धर्मकीर्ति राखेको पाइन्छ। जस्तै जयसुन्दरीले धारा मर्मतार्थ गुठी राख्नु (अ. २६: १३३-३४), एक विधवा भाई बुहारीले धारा वनाउनु र संभारार्थ गुठी राख्नु (अ. १४४: ४३१-३२), मृगिणिले आर्यभिक्षुणी संघको लागि गुठी राख्नु (अ. ९५: ३८२-३८३), जयवर्तिकाले छत्रफुल चढाउनु (अ. ९०: ३७२-७३), सुवर्ण गोमिनीले दान दिनु (अ. १२५: ४७२-७३),

मानमतिले खेत गुठी राख्नु (अ. ३९: १७५-७६), विधवा देशभत्तारिकाले मातृकागणको पुनरोद्धार (अ. १७: २११-२१३) गर्नु, भोगदेवीले सूरभोगेस्वर, भाग्यदेवीले लडितमहेस्वर स्थापना गर्नु (अ. ८५: ३६६-३६७), ईत्यादि।

यस प्रकार संपन्न नारीगले आफ्नो संपत्ति इच्छानुसार खर्च गरेको पाईन्छ। छोराको आज्ञावारे विचार गर्दा उनी विधवा नारी भएर मात्र यस्तो अनुमतिको आवश्यकता भएको हो त भन्ने प्रश्न उठ्छ। यस सन्दर्भमा अन्य अभिलेखहरू अध्ययन गर्दा सधवा वा विधवा महिलाले मात्र नभई पुरुषले पनि मान्यजनको आज्ञा लिएको पाईन्छ। उदाहरणार्थ संवत् ३८८ मा एक पुरुष अधिकारीले मानदेवको आज्ञा लिएर आफ्नो कृति राखेको (अ. ३: ३१-३३) कुरालाई लिन सकिन्छ। चाँगुनारायण स्थित मानदेवको अभिलेखमा मानदेवले आफ्नी विधवा आमाको सल्लाह र रेखदेखमा शासन चलाएको कुरा उल्लेख छ (अ. २: ९-३०)। रेग्मीका (२०२६: ३४७) भनाई अनुसार मानदेवले पनि आमाको आज्ञा लिएर मात्र शासन चलाएका थिए। तसर्थ समाजमा कुनै पुरुष त कुनै समय नारीको सहयोग र सल्लाहको आवश्यकता रहेको र त्यसै अनुरूप सहमति र अनुमति प्राप्त गरी कार्य गरेको पाईन्छ यसैले विधवा नारीको आर्थिक स्वतन्त्रता माथि शंका गर्न सकिदैन। तर यो एक पारिवारिक सल्लाह र सहमतिको रूपमा लिन सकिन्छ। यस्तो सल्लाह संयुक्त परिवारमा जहाँ पनि हुने गर्दछ।

रेग्मी (1969m 273-74) ले वैत्रिक संपत्तिमा छोरीको हकबारे उल्लेख भएका अभिलेख नपाएको कुरा व्यक्त गरेका छन् भने त्यसै वर्ष प्रकाशित अन्य पुस्तकमा (रेग्मी, २०२६ साल: ३४३) राजकुमारी जयसुन्दरीलाई जयदेवले हस्तान्तरण गरेको ग्रामीण ईलाका उनका पिता महिदेवले छोरी भाग पेवा "दाई जो" दिएको अनुमान गरेका छन्। यस विषयमा अभिलेखहरूमा (अ. २२: ९१-१०९। अ. २६: १३२-१३४) राजा वसन्तदेवले जयसुन्दरीलाई उनका सन्तान दरसन्तानले भोग गर्न पाउने गरी एक कोट्ट प्रदान गरेको छ। त्यस कोट्टको चार किल्ला छुट्याई सो ईलाका भित्र वसोवास गर्ने र भविष्यमा वसोवास गर्न आउने वासिन्दाहरूले जयसुन्दरी र उनका परिवारलाई भाग, भोग, कर, पिण्डक बुझाई उनैको आज्ञा र रेखदेखमा जीवन निर्वाह गर्नु भनी आदेश दिएका थिए। यसरी छोरीले पनि वैत्रिक संपत्तिको केहि भाग वृत्ति स्वरूप पाएको मात्र नभई आफ्नो क्षेत्रका स्वतन्त्र अधिकारी समेत बनेको देखिन्छ।

सर्वसाधारण नारीले यस्तो पेवाहरू पाए नपाएको कुनै अभिलेख भेटिएको छैन। तैपनि राजपरिवार र गण्यमान्य परिवारका नारीले मात्र नभई विभिन्न महिलाहरूले अनेकन कृति राख्नु र आमा बाबुको नाममा पुण्यानुमोदन गर्नु आदिवाट उनीहरूले पनि यस्तै केही भाग पाएको वा पति र पतिको परिवारको हक नलग्ने भएकोले संपत्तिको मालिक उनीहरू पनि थिए कि भन्ने अनुमान गर्न सकिन्छ।

केही अभिलेखहरू (अ. ६०, ६१, ६२, ६३ र ६४: २४४-२६२) मा समुच्चस्त्रीकर एवं त्रिकर शब्द उल्लेख भएको कुरालाई लिएर कतिपय इतिहासकारहरूले स्त्री माथि कुनै कर लाग्थ्यो भन्ने अनुमान गरेका छन्। यसले स्त्रीको जीवन वा अस्तित्व गिरेको

आशंका गरिएको पाईन्छ। तर धनबज्र बज्राचार्यज्यूले अनेक ऐतिहासिक प्रमाण स्वरूप यो स्त्रीमाथि लाग्ने कर नभई भाग, भोग, कर (पिण्डक) तीन समुच्च कर (त्रिकर) हुन् (पृ. २४७) भन्ने कुरा प्रष्ट गरेका छन्। तत्कालीन, निम्न वर्गका नारीको आर्थिक अवस्था त्यति राम्रो नभएको र उनीहरू आफ्नो जीवन निर्वाहका लागि संसाना रोजगारी गर्दथे भन्ने कुरा ".... बढार्ने आईमाईलाई १ पुरान ४ पन...." (अ. ७२: ३०१-८) भनी पारिश्रमिक तोकिएवाट प्रष्ट हुन्छ। यसरी साधारण कार्य नै भएतापनि नारीहरू सरकारी नोकरीमा संलग्न रहेको कुरा बुझिन्छ भने गरीब भएपनि नारीहरू आत्मनिर्भर र स्वावलम्बी रहन प्रयत्नरत रहेको बुझिन्छ।

यस बाहेक त्यसताका देवदास र देवदासीहरूको प्रचलन रहेको थियो भन्ने कुरा एक अभिलेख (अ. १२९: ४८५-८९) बाट प्रष्ट हुन्छ। त्यसमा "... १० जना देवदासलाई १४० माणिका र २० जना देवदासीलाई ३६० माणिका ..." भनी लेखिएको हुंदा देवदासले भन्दा देवदासीले प्रतिव्यक्ति ४ माणिका वढी पारिश्रमिक पाउने स्पष्ट भएको छ। हुन त यो अभिलेख निकै खण्डित रहेको हुंदा के कस्तो कार्यको लागि यस्तो भिन्न पारिश्रमिक रहेको हो स्पष्ट हुन सकेको छैन तैपनि सरकारी तवरवाट नारीहरूको आर्थिक हकमा समानता मात्र नभै औषत रूपमा प्राथमिकता दिएको छ कि भन्ने अनुमान गर्न सकिन्छ। त्यसै अभिलेखको (पृ. ४८८) अर्को खण्डमा देवदासहरूलाई १२० पुराण र देवदासीहरूलाई ८०..." भनी उल्लेख भएको छ। तर यही कति जनाको लागि भन्ने स्पष्ट छैन। यदि सोही १० र २० जना देवदास र देवदासीको वारेमा यो रकम छुट्याईएको भए नारीले पुरुषको दाँजोमा तीन खण्डको एक खण्ड मात्र पारिश्रमिक पाउने बुझिन्छ। अन्य प्रमाण नभेट्टाएसम्म नारी र पुरुषको पारिश्रमिक दस्तुरको के कस्तो व्यवस्था थियो भन्ने प्रष्ट गर्न सकिदैन।

धार्मिक स्थिति

माथि उल्लिखित विभिन्न अभिलेखहरूबाट तत्कालीन समाजमा हरेक व्यक्तिलाई वर्ग, वर्ण र लिङ्गभेद विना धार्मिक स्वतन्त्रता रहेको प्रष्ट हुन्छ। उक्त स्वतन्त्रताको उपभोग नारी वर्गले राम्ररी गरेको पाईन्छ। आ-आफ्नो ईच्छाअनुसार कुनै नारीले शिवलिङ्ग भोगेश्वर, लाङ्कितमहेश्वर त कसैले आर्यावलोकीतेश्वर, विजयश्वरी आदि स्थापना गर्नु एवं भिक्षुणीसंघका लागि गुठी राख्नु, चैत्य निर्माण गर्नु आदि गरेको पाईन्छ। यी विविध कृतिहरूलाई औल्याउदै एकै परिवारका सदस्यहरू पनि वैष्णवी, शैवी र शक्ति उपासक भएको दर्साएका छन् (रेग्मी २०२६: ३४८)। तर ती अभिलेखहरूमा विभिन्न राजाहरूले जस्तो ती महिलाहरूले आफुलाई वैष्णव, शाक्त वा बौद्ध मार्गी भनी घोषणा गरेको पाईदैन। शैव, वैष्णव एवं शाक्त सबै हिन्दु धर्मकै हाँगाहरू हुन्। तसर्थ एकै परिवारमा विविध धर्मको नभै एकै मूल धर्मका अनुयायी भएको मान्न सकिन्छ। कुनै धर्मको अनुयायी भएर मात्र नभै आफ्नै वा कसैको ईच्छापूर्ति एवं तत्कालीन समाजको आवश्यकता पूर्ति गर्ने वा सांस्कृतिक संपदा संरक्षण गर्ने जस्ता धर्म कृति राखेको पनि पाईन्छ। उदाहरणार्थ स्वर्गीय

विभुवर्माको इच्छा पूर्ति गर्न भग्न मातृकागणको पुनरुत्थानका लागि देश भद्रारिका अग्रसर भएको, ठाउँको आवश्यकतानुसार लोककल्याणका लागि धारा राख्ने, भिक्षुणी संघको संरक्षण गर्ने गरेकोलाई लिन सकिन्छ। तसर्थ ती महिलाहरूमा विविध धार्मिक सम्प्रदायको केही प्रभाव परेतापनि उनीहरू सोही सम्प्रदायको अनुयायी नै भएका थिए भन्न अलि कठिन पर्छ। जे होस् त्यस समयमा आफ्नो ईच्छा र गच्छेअनुसार कुनै पनि धर्म कृति राख्न नारीलगायत संपूर्ण वर्गका व्यक्तिलाई स्वतन्त्रता थियो। त्यसमा धार्मिक सहिष्णुताले ठूलो भुमिका खेलेको देखिन्छ।

तत्कालीन समाजमा हिन्दु र बौद्ध धर्मको उत्थान, संरक्षण र संबर्धनका लागि नारी पुरुष दुवै वर्ग तत्पर रहेको पाइन्छ। तर बौद्ध धर्मको संरक्षण र सम्बर्धनमा भने राजपरिवारका महिलाहरू भन्दा सर्वसाधारण वर्गका महिलाहरूको सहभागिता बढेको पाइन्छ। जस्तै एक महिलाले ठूलो चैत्य निर्माण गरी ४५ माणिका कुत आउने गुठी राखेकी (अ. १: १-८), मृगिणिले आर्यभिक्षुणी संघकोलागि गुठी राखेकी (अ. १५: ३८२-३८३), कुनै एक साधारण महिलाले पूजा र मर्मत सभारका लागि आर्यभिक्षुणी संघलाई केहि पण पुराण नगद दान दिएको (अ. १३५: ५०७) आदि। तर राजपरिवारका महिलाहरूको बौद्ध धर्म उत्थानका लागि राखेका कृतिहरू पाइदैन।

विविध अभिलेखले प्राचीनकालमा भिक्षुहरूले जस्तै भिक्षुणीहरूले पनि आफ्नो बेग्लै संघ स्थापना गर्न पाउने र दानको सहभागी बनेको कुरा स्पष्ट भएको छ। धर्ममा लिङ्गभेद अनुसार भेदभाव देखिदैन जबकि वर्तमान युगमा हिन्दु धर्ममा मात्र नभई बौद्ध धर्ममा समेत लिङ्गभेदको हिसाबमा व्यापक असमानताहरू व्याप्त भएको पाइन्छ। उदाहरणार्थ गृहत्याग गरी भिक्षुहरूले जस्तै विहारमा जीवन यापन गरेतापनि नारी वर्गले भिक्षुणी उपाधि नपाई केवल अनागारिका बन्ने र उच्च दान एवं विशिष्ट समारोहका भोजनमा भिक्षुहरूको प्रथम हक हुने, महापरित्राण संचालन अनागारिकाबाट नहुने आदि असमानताहरू पाइन्छन्। हाल विद्यमान यी लिङ्गभेदअनुसारको धार्मिक हक माथिको असमानता कहिले शुरू भयो, भिक्षुणी संघको विलय कहिले भयो भन्ने विषय अध्ययन गर्न बाँकि नै छ। वज्राचार्यको भनाईमा (२०३०: ५०७), मध्यकालमा नै भिक्षुणी संघको लोप भैसकेको थियो भन्ने छ। जे होस् विविध आधारबाट नियाल्दा प्राचीनकालमा आजको भन्दा व्यापक रूपमा धार्मिक सहिष्णुता मात्र नभई स्त्री र पुरुष बीच कुनै भेदभाव विना धार्मिक स्वतन्त्रता र समानता रहेको कुरा माथिको उदाहरणहरूबाट थाहा पाइन्छ ।

सिंहावलोकन

माथिका वृत्तान्तबाट प्रष्ट भएको छ कि प्राचीन समाजमा नारीले केही विषयमा स्वतन्त्रता र धार्मिक समानताको उपभोग गरेका थिए। तर तत्कालीन स्थिति वन्देजहरू अध्ययन गर्दा नारी र पुरुष बीच असमानताको खाडल व्यापक रहेको पाइन्छ। ती स्थिति वन्देजहरूमा कुनै न कुनै प्रकारले पुरुषको हक सुरक्षित गर्ने नीतिहरू लुकेको पाइन्छ। तर पनि नारीको आफ्नै सक्रियता र क्षमतामा आआफ्नो कृति फैलाउन वा परिचित हुन

केही नारीहरू सफल भएका थिए। जस्तै राज्यवती-सजा मानदेवका संरक्षिका बनेकी हुँदा राजनीतिमा समेत उनी सक्रिय रूपमा संलग्न रहेको देखिन्छ। विजयवती अनेक कलाका पारंगत भनी परिचित (अ. २०: ८२-८७) भएकी छिन्। तसर्थ उनले विविध कला तर्फ शिक्षा हासिल गरेको स्पष्ट हुन्छ। तर यस समयमा महिलाहरूलाई शिक्षा दिन पुरुषहरूको लागि जस्तो सार्वजनिक संस्थाको व्यवस्था भएको देखिदैन (Shah, 1992:29)। तसर्थ के बुझिन्छ भने उनीले आफ्नो व्यक्तिगत प्रयास र इच्छावाट शिक्षा प्राप्त गरेकी थिइन्।

बज्राचार्यको पुस्तकमा भृकुटीवारे कुनै अभिलेख समाविष्ट भएको छैन। राष्ट्रिय विभुतिको रूपमा परिचित भृकुटी र तिब्बती ~~संस्कृत~~ श्रद्धाचोड ग्याम्पोको विवाह सम्बन्धवारे विचार गर्ने हो भने उनले नेपालको राजनैतिक एवं कुटनैतिक सम्बन्धमा महत्वपूर्ण दायित्व निभाएको देखिन्छ। तर आजको दृष्टिकोण उनको स्थिति अर्थात वैवाहिक सम्बन्धको निर्णयलाई नियाल्दा उनको आफ्नै व्यक्तिगत अस्तित्व नभएको देखिन्छ। यसकारण भण्डारीले (२०२५: ७०) "... ~~आम्हा~~ बाबु नै कन्याको भाग्य निर्माता हुन्थ्यो...." भन्नुमा कुनै असत्यता देखिदैन। यस घटनालाई देशको आवश्यकता पूर्तिका लागि एक नारी (राजकुमारी) को बली चढाएको पनि मान्न सकिन्छ। जुन प्राय लिच्छविहरूले वैशालीकालदेखि नै गर्दै आएको पाईन्छ (Jha, 1970: 26-27)। आखिर भृकुटीले आफ्नो क्षमतावाट ख्याति प्राप्त गरिन्, नेपाल-तिब्बत सम्बन्ध सुधारिन्।

माथि उल्लिखित संपूर्ण अभिलेखहरूको अध्ययनपछि यही निष्कर्षमा पुग्दछौ कि त्यसवेला स्त्रीले धार्मिक, आर्थिक एवं व्यक्तित्वको विकासमा केही अवसरहरू उपभोग गरेका थिए। समष्टिगत रूपमा, त्यसवेला बनेका नियम कानूनहरू एकातिरबाट केहि स्वतन्त्रता दिएको देखिन्छ भने अर्को तर्फबाट तिनै नियमहरूले नारीलाई विविध कानूनी एवं सामाजिक बन्धनमा जाकिदिएको पनि पाईन्छ। तसर्थ ".... Women were highly respected in society..." भन्ने भा (१९७०: १७५) को भनाई स्वीकार योग्य देखिदैन। नारी स्वयम् अग्रसर र सक्षम भए मात्र समाजमा प्रतिष्ठित हुन पुग्थे र उनीहरूले शिक्षा हासिल गर्नुको साथै तत्कालीन राजनीतिमा समेत सक्रिय भूमिका निभाएको देखिन्छ।

शाहको यो भनाई "... Men & Women enjoyed equal status in performing Religious & Social Duties...." (१९९२: २९) मा अर्ध सत्यता मात्र पाईन्छ। किनकि धार्मिक क्षेत्रमा समानता पाए तापनि सामाजिक दायित्वमा भने स्त्री र पुरुषबीच निकै भिन्नता पाइन्छ। तत्कालीन स्थिति बन्देजहरू अनुसार पति बहुलाएमा, जोगी भै गएमा, मृत्यु भएमा, हराएमा, पतित भएमा वा राजदण्ड पाएमा पत्नीले पुनर्विवाह गर्न पाइने व्यवस्था गरेको पाइन्छ। यो व्यवस्थालाई लिएर कतिपय इतिहासकारहरूले पुनर्विवाह, विधवा विवाहलाई कानूनी मान्यता दिएको भनी चर्चा गरेका छन्। हुन त यी विविध सनदपत्रहरूले नारी वर्गलाई पुनर्विवाह एवं विधवा विवाहलाई कानूनी मान्यता दिएको मान्न सकिन्छ तर त्यही अभिलेखबाट के प्रष्ट पारेको छ भने पुनर्विवाह गर्ने नारीलाई "चरित्रहीन" को दर्जा दिइन्थ्यो भने पुनर्विवाह पश्चात निसन्तान रहेको खण्डमा "माप्चोक" अड्डावाट कारवाही गरिन्थ्यो। एक पुरुषले बहुविवाह गर्न वा भित्रिनी राख्न

यी कुनै नियमको पालन गर्नु पर्दैनथ्यो न त लान्छित नै हुन्थ्यो। उ हरेक तवरबाट स्वतन्त्र भनौ वा पत्नी प्रति अनुत्तरदायी रहे पनि मतलब नहुने देखिन्छ। यदि नारी पनि पुरुष जतिकै स्वतन्त्र भैदिएको भए यस्तो दोधारे नियम बन्दैनथ्यो होला। कुनै नारीले चैत्य निर्माण गरी गुठी राखेर प्राप्त पुण्यबाट ".....स्त्रीत्व छोडी पुरुषत्व पाउँ" (अ. १: १-२) भनी प्रार्थना नै गर्दैनथे होला। हरिराम जोशी (२०३०: ६९) ले यसै प्रसंगमा "....उत्तर प्राचीनकालमा पनि पुरुषहरू समाजमा विशेष आदरणीय रहेर नारी जीवन एक प्रकारले हीन संझ्ने प्रवृत्ति स्वयम् नारीमा आएको देखिन्छ" भन्ने विचार व्यक्त गरेका छन्। साथै जोशी एवं वज्राचार्य दुवैले नारी माथि किन्नरी जातकको प्रभाव परी स्त्रीत्वबाट वैराग्य उत्पन्न भएको आशंका व्यक्त गरेका छन्। परन्तु किन्नरी जातक कथाको सार संक्षेप (अ. १: ६-७) अध्ययन गरेपछि यस कथाका नारी पात्र (रानी) लाई नभई पुरुष पात्र (राजा) लाई नारी प्रति घृणा, अविश्वास र वैराग्यता उत्पन्न हुनु पर्ने एवं पुरुष पुरुष बीच वैमनस्यता र ईर्ष्या उत्पन्न हुनु पर्ने महसुस हुन्छ। नारीमा यस्तो वैराग्यता किन आयो? दण्डको भागी भएर? विचारणीय छ कि सोही अपराधमा कतै नारीले मात्र दण्ड पाउने पुरुषले नपाउने हो कि? यदि इन्द्रिय दमनकै कुरालाई स्वीकार गर्ने हो भने उनले पुरुष भएर फेरी जन्मनु भन्नु पर्छ जस्तो लाग्दैन वरू बौद्ध सिद्धान्तानुसार मोक्षकै कामना गरे पनि हुन्थ्यो। तर उनले मोक्ष खोज्नुको सट्टा नारीत्वबाट मुक्ति पाई पुरुषत्व प्राप्तिको चाहना गरेका छन्। तसर्थ त्यस अवस्थामा पुरुषको जीवन नारीको भन्दा निकै सुविधा युक्त थियो र निकै स्वतन्त्र थिए भन्ने अनुमान गर्न सकिन्छ।

समाजमा पत्नीलाई अर्धाङ्गीणीको दर्जा दिइन्थ्यो। मानदेवले आफ्नो मुद्रामा एकातिर "मानाङ्क" र अर्को तिर "श्री भोगिणी" कुँदाएर भोगिनीलाई आफू सरहको स्थान दिएका थिए (वज्राचार्य २०३०: १७४) भन्ने उल्लेख गरी समाजमा नारी र पुरुषको समान स्थान थियो भन्ने उल्लेख गरेको देखिन्छ। तर यति मात्रैले दुवै वर्गको समान स्थान रहेको प्रष्ट हुँदैन। माथि उल्लिखित विविध अभिलेखहरूअनुसार मानदेवका तीन पत्नी थिए भन्ने स्पष्ट भएको छ। एकलाई समान स्थान दिएर अन्यलाई त्यसबाट विमुख गरेका छन्। यदि समाजमा साच्चै पत्नीलाई अर्धाङ्गीणी मान्ने हो भने यसरी बहुविवाह वा बहुपत्नीको प्रश्न उठ्दैनथ्यो। बहुपत्नी ग्रहण गर्नासाथ अर्धाङ्गीणीको अस्तित्व स्वतः अन्त हुन्छ।

यसरी हरेक दृष्टिबाट प्राचीन नेपाली समाजमा नारी र पुरुष बीच रहेको असमान व्यवस्था र व्यवहारहरूको अस्तित्व प्रष्ट हुन्छ। यस्तो असमानता व्याप्त हुँदा हुँदै पनि रेग्मीले (२०२६: ३४७) भने जस्तो नारीको स्वतन्त्र अस्तित्व नै नभएको चाहि कदापि हैन। त्यस समय यदि कसैले अपराध गरेमा अपराधी लगायत उनका संपूर्ण परिवारलाई नै दण्ड दिइन्थ्यो। वज्राचार्य, (२०३०: ४५१, ४९६-५०६) केवल अपराधीका पत्नीलाई मात्र हैन। तसर्थ यस कुरालाई औल्याएर स्त्रीको स्वतन्त्र अस्तित्व नभएको मान्न सकिँदैन। यस सम्बन्धमा निष्कर्षमा पुग्न नारीले गरेको अपराधमा उनका पति एवं परिवार

दण्डको सहभागी हुने कानूनी व्यवस्था थियो, थिएन भन्ने कुरा पत्ता लगाउन जरूरी छ। यदि पत्नीको अपराधमा पतिलाई दण्ड नदिने हो र केवल पतिको अपराधको दण्डका सहभागी पत्नी पनि हुनु पर्ने हो भने के सिद्ध हुन्छ भने त्यस समय स्त्रीको स्वतन्त्र अस्तित्व थिएन। हालसम्म यस विषयमा कुनै स्पष्ट प्रमाण प्राप्त भएको छैन। तसर्थ अन्य प्रमाण नभेटाएसम्म प्राचीन नेपालको समाजमा स्त्री अस्तित्वहीन थिएन, उनीहरू केही हदसम्म स्वतन्त्रताको उपभोग पनि गर्दथे तर पुरुषको दाँजोमा स्त्रीको समानान्तर स्थिति भने थिएन भन्ने निस्कर्समा पुगिन्छ। समाजमा नारी र पुरुष बीचको असमानताको खाडल खन्न सामाजिक र धार्मिक बन्धन (पतिव्रत) त बिद्यमान थिए नै तिनलाई अझ गहिरो बनाउन तत्कालीन प्रशासनिक एवं कानूनी व्यवस्थाले पनि कम भूमिका खेलेको देखिदैन। यसवारे थप कुरा भन्न वा निश्चित निस्कर्समा पुग्न चाहिँ वढी प्रमाणको प्राप्ति तथा विश्लेषणको खाँचो छ।
अस्तु।

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BOOK REVIEW

Nepal: A Himalayan Kingdom in Transition, 1996. Pradyumna P. Karan, Hiroshi Ishii and others. 334 pages. Tokyo: The United Nations University. (Advance Proof Copy for Review).

The present book under review is "the description of Nepal's growth and change during the last four decades in resource development, land use, deforestation, agriculture, population, cultural pattern, urbanization, industrial growth, transport systems, tourism and associated environmental management issues" (p.284). This is a book on "basic facts" of Nepal where the authors have integrated a massive amount of materials from different sources and presented a synthesis on Nepal's efforts to develop and change in the last four decades.

There are 11 chapters in the book, including 26 tables, 32 illustrations and 55 photographs. Chapters Five, Six and Seven are relatively longer, covering almost 36 per cent of the total text (pp. 101-204). A book of this size demands more careful evaluation than can be summarized and justified in a short review. First, let me briefly outline the contents of the book.

Chapter I introduces Nepal as a least developed country of the world. The second chapter, on "Environment and Natural Resource Base" gives a brief account of the geoecological zones, climatic configurations, water resources, mineral resources, forest and scenic resources and natural resource management systems in Nepal. Chapter Three on "Land Use, Forest cover and Environmental Problems", has a short section on land use pattern (less than one page) but goes on to some details on topics such as forest cover, forest typology, deforestation and degradation, and principal factors leading to deforestation, forest management, forestry institutions and strategies for forest development in Nepal. One of the most important strategies of HMG to develop the forestry sector is the formation of "Forestry User Groups" throughout the kingdom beginning 1992 (Eighth Five Year Plan), is given minimal attention in the chapter. Chapter Four addresses the patterns and problems of agriculture, discussing the various aspects of agriculture such as cropping pattern, productivity and policies for reducing the incidence of landlessness in Nepal. The main problem of this chapter is the lack of analysis as to why agriculture still remains traditional and why conditions

of farmers have not improved over the years. Chapter Five, on "Human Resources", deals with mainly the demography of Nepal, covering topics such as the growth of population, distribution and density, and migration patterns (internal migration and circular migration). Then this chapter provides a case study of population mobility in a village (Taranagar) in the Middle Mountain Region in Gorkha district, followed by a section on fertility, mortality and demographic transition, population policies and family planning. Finally, there is a short section on health care, literacy and human development. The health care system and education are vital topics in relation to human resource development, which should have demanded a separate chapter. I don't know why the authors want to call this chapter as "Human Resources". Chapter VI, on "Cultural Patterns", deals with the various language groups of Nepal, the society, culture and economy of the various ethnic groups, environmental attitudes of cultural groups and historical context of ethnic interaction and change in Nepal. One of the nicely integrated sections in this chapter is the case study of a Newar village "Satungal" in the Kathmandu valley. Though the chapter as a whole provides an overview of culture in relation to environment, there is little here in the way of cultural accounts of people who have successfully adapted to the area over the years. Nowhere, have the authors attempted to isolate specific cultural factors (such as religion, village endogamy, kinship or the status of women) which are inimical to conventional developmental norms. Nor does the chapter provide information on the 60 different ethnic/caste groups enumerated in the 1991 census. The actual number of Magars, Gurungs, Rais, Limbus and other groups are, in fact, much higher than quoted in chapter on the basis of mother-tongue classification.

Chapter Seven, on "Settlement Patterns and Urbanization", briefly describes typical settlements and patterns of urbanization in Nepal. However, the focus is mostly on the three cities of the Kathmandu valley. The chapter describes environmental degradation in the Kathmandu valley caused by factories and large number of smoke spewing vehicles. The authors conclude that while urbanization, population pressure and poverty may be the proximate causes of environmental degradation, policy failures to formulate and implement appropriate environmental regulations are frequently the underlying cause (p. 203). Chapter Eight, on "Industrial Development", highlights the patterns of industrial growth in Nepal before and after 1950, geographical distribution of industries, potential for industrial development, recent industrial policy and has a small section on cottage industry and handicrafts. Despite the information used, the authors are not willing to conclude that the picture of small-scale industrial development in Nepal was better before 1950 than after. Likewise, why

foreign donors and investors are more interested in infrastructures than in industries, is not given due attention in the chapter.

Chapter Nine, on, "Transport, Trade and Communication Patterns", is interesting as it provides a brief historical overview of trails and the role of porters, motorable roads, railways, air transport, trade and location of markets, foreign trade and transit routes, transport strategy for landlocked Nepal and communication patterns and much more briefly on postal communication, telecommunication, telex and telegraph, radio, television and press. Chapter Ten, on, "Development of Tourism", gives a glance of tourism in Nepal in general. It highlights touristic resources, natural and scenic landscapes, types of tourism, touristic frontiers and issues such as economic development potential of tourism and environmental impacts of tourism in Nepal. The last chapter "Development Challenges" emphasizes the population-resource balance equation, which according to the authors, is not given serious attention in planning the developmental efforts in Nepal.

No doubt, we need a systematic, historical and evaluative discourse on the issues of change and development in Nepal. My dissatisfaction about the book, however, rests on so many shortcomings encountered in the book. First, let me begin with the numerous unsupported statements made in almost all the chapter. These statements, I feel misinform the general readers and thus demands a careful scrutiny.

In the first chapter itself the authors have shown soft corners towards India in substantiating their arguments. According to the authors, Nepal's introduction of the work permit system for Indians in Nepal violates the 1950 Peace and Friendship Treaty between Nepal and India(p.9). The authors obviously are not sensitive as to how this poorest country of the world would survive economically and politically if uncontrolled flow of Indians remains unregulated in Nepal? This argument is reemphasized in chapter V (. p. 122). It is surprising to note that nowhere have the authors made an effort to comprehend the fact that the uncontrolled flow of Indians is creating unemployment for a large number of Nepali people. Furthermore, if Nepal does not strictly enforce the birth registration system, there is no way of identifying a local from a recently arrived Indian national. This has already created a chaos of the "citizenship issue" in the Nepal Tarai. On page 10, they note that "..... communist leaders were elected in 1994 on the basis of anti-India rhetoric". In fact, the anti-India sentiment in Nepal can be observed throughout history but became more pronounced when Nepal introduced the Panchayat system of Government in 1962. Many Nepalese painfully remember the extreme Indian high handedness of 1989 when India blockaded Nepal for 15 months, destabilizing the country's economy and politics. So what makes authors blame the Communist

government is not clear given the fact that non-communist voting Nepalese are forced to make nationalist standings vis-a-vis the Indian government. The other statement, on p. 14 "Nepal's trade and transit impasse with India in 1989, contributed to a period of high inflation and slow economic growth". This statement could be true in certain contexts but, again, this was the first time in Nepal's history when Nepal attempted to come out from the Indian grip to prove itself as a sovereign nation state. While Nepal has already forgotten this kind of lessons by now by withdrawing the work permit system for Indians and it is also the case that Nepal must pursue an independent economic policy to survive and prosper.

In Chapter Two, p. 24 it is noted that "A 1993 field survey of several Nepali Pravasi Sanghs--organizations of Nepalese which provide assistance to new immigrants in north Indian cities--revealed that nearly 1.5 million Nepalese have left the middle Himalayan area for jobs in India". Similar statement reappears on p.117 of Chapter V as well. No authentic source is given in the text for this information. In fact, the Pravasi Nepali Sanghs are poorly organized institutions in India which hardly could count the flow of Nepali emigrants in India with little resources at their disposal. .

On p. 106 of Chapter Five, it is written: "In an agricultural country like Nepal, a more meaningful measure of population pressure on the land is the ratio of people to the cultivated land. At the district level, the density per cultivated area ranges from almost 3,000 persons per square kilometer in Mugu to 191 in Mustang". This kind of statement is misleading as to how people are making their living in the Mountain region of Nepal. A Mountain inhabitant knows very well that his livelihood does not depend on agriculture alone and must simultaneously engage in at least three types of economic activities, e.g. agriculture, animal husbandry and trade to make a living. In recent years, a lot of Mountain people also seasonally engage in trekking and mountaineering activities. Elsewhere, I have written (1993) that the Byanshi people, who live in the High Mountain area of Darchula district (above 9,000 ft.), are the more prosperous group compared to other groups living in the lower elevations of the district. The statement such as "The Magars, Gurungs, Thakalis, Rais and Limbus have been Hinduised.." (p. 143) is not fully true. In fact, except the Magars and, to some extent the Thakalis, other groups are least Hinduized in Nepal. In Eastern Nepal, the Limbus are the least Hinduized group though they have remained in close interaction with the Parvate Hindu groups over the last three centuries. Again the statement like "The Hindu of north Indian origin in the Tarai show a low degree of animal husbandry, as do the Newars (p. 151)", is not at all true so far as the Yadavs of the Hindu Tarai are concerned. Numerically, they are not only the largest single Hindu group of the Tarai

but also raise a large number of cattle and buffaloes. They are popularly known as Gwala or Ahir meaning "milkmen" in the Tarai.

The statement in Chapter Seven, "A little more than 99 per cent of these localities had populations less than 2,000..... Eighty-nine per cent of the total population lived in localities that had a population less than 2,000 (p. 177) confuses more to the readers. Similarly, in Chapter Eight also a statement reads "A field study in the Tarai revealed that workers who are moving to areas where industrial jobs are available are uneducated and untrained" (p. 217). Surprisingly, there is no authentic source for this statement as well. .

Second, the authors rely too much on secondary sources in their treatment of the complex issues such as the change and development in Nepal. In fact, the whole analysis is based on census and survey data. Census data, particularly the demographic data of many developing countries of the world, are full of holes and often quite unreliable. So, any effort to understand Nepal better must not only include the macro-level data but also information from village studies (which are indeed available) to understand the concrete patterns of change and development over time.

Third, in every argument made by the authors, the population-resource balance model or the Malthusian theory is implicit (such as over population, deforestation, shrinking land base, declining agricultural yields and increasing poverty). There is clearly, a perceptual problem here. Nepal can as well be seen as being rich in terms of its natural and human resources. Some of the greatest resources of Nepal are its altitude, climate and topography where a variety of staple and cash crops can be grown throughout the year. Likewise, the multi-racial, multi-linguistic and multi-cultural characteristics of the nation could prove itself to be the best human resources if the leaders learn how to harness them properly. Moreover, the successful adaptative strategy of various groups of people in Nepal is little highlighted in the whole text.

Finally, while poverty and underdevelopment in Nepal are interpreted overwhelmingly in terms of what is physical, technical and observable in the statistical sense, I feel that the authors deliberately avoided to explore the root causes of the problems of underdevelopment in Nepal. Some such are as follows:

A. Nepal is not only landlocked but also India-locked. Nepal should learn from the achievements made by India in a number of sectors. But India's interests continue to dominate Nepal in major aspects of social, economic and political life. No doubt, thousands of Nepalese go to India for short term employment and likewise thousands of Indians also come to Nepal for work and business as well. Considering the size of the respective country, if

this kind of uncontrolled flow of Indians into Nepal continue, it will definitely destabilize Nepalese economy and politics. Furthermore, Nepal's policy of population control becomes meaningless until and unless this uncontrolled flow from Indian is regulated. So, Nepal must regulate its border if it has to develop and fulfil the interests of the people as a whole.

B. The other fundamental root of Nepal's underdevelopment is its inappropriate politics and its less than committed leadership throughout history. Whether it was the Rana regime or the partyless Panchayat regime or the multi-party democratic form, the governments are not really serving the common people: The increasing poverty of people over the years clearly proves that the governments have not been effective.. After the onset of multiparty democracy, corruption has become more public and ministers and members of parliament have become more concerned for their personal gain rather than acting committedly for the Nepalese who are struggling for their basic needs. Overpolitization has become the main pastime and hobby for the majority of Nepalese . Until and unless the government is sincere and committed for development., Nepal will remain underdeveloped in the next century as well even if we design the best plans to improve the socioeconomic conditions of people.

C. Finally, though billions of dollars have already flown into this poor country as grants and loans in the name of development, implementation of concrete development programs to improve the economy of people seems far away. In fact, if one compares Nepal's performances with those of the South Asian countries over the last four decades, Nepal has become poorer and more underdeveloped than before. It seems that aid and development programs are initiated in Nepal primarily for political reasons and in order to fulfil the interests mainly of the donor themselves rather than on humanistic and nationalistic grounds.

Nevertheless, a patient student of interdisciplinary studies can extract a good deal of valuable source materials from the book for further research and analysis. It reads easily not only because of its detailed names, places, dates and events but also because of its systematic and coherent picture of the Nepalese society over the last four decades. The book can prove a good text not only for foreign students, particularly undergraduates, but also for the B.A. level Nepali students as well. In addition, the book should be of great service to those interested in contemporary Nepal. Numerous statistical tables and extended bibliography (230 titles of published materials) on Nepal also increase its value. The only fear I have about the book is that its price could go high which would not be affordable for the average Nepali student.

- Dilli R. Dahal

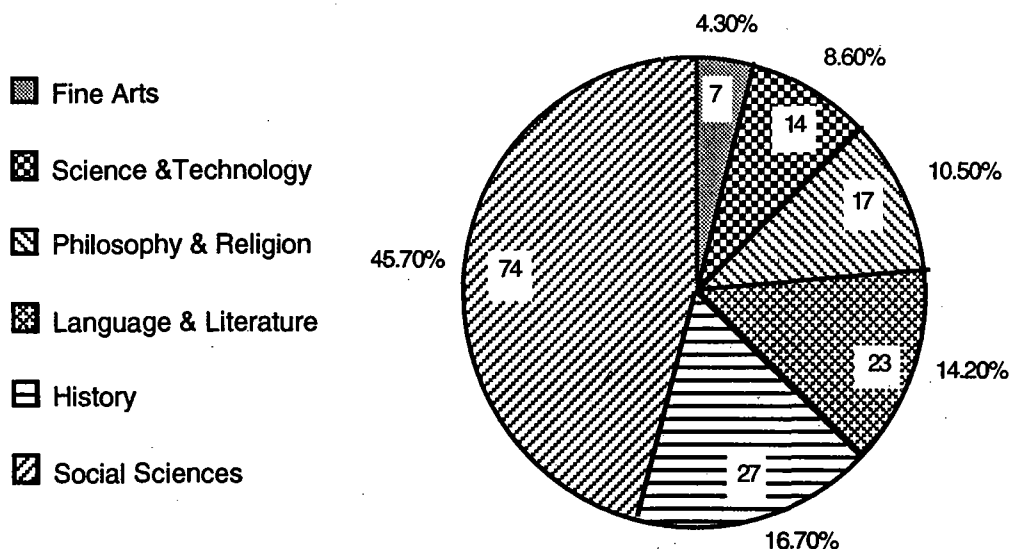
CONTRIBUTIONS TO NEPALESE STUDIES

CUMULATIVE INDEX: 1986-1996

Purna P. Amatya

Contributions to Nepalese Studies is a research oriented semi-annual journal of the Centre for Nepal and Asian Studies (CNAS). Started in 1973, the Journal has been able to establish record for its continued and uninterrupted publication for last 23 years—an unusual phenomenon for a professional journal in Nepal. With regular publication of Scholarly articles and book-reviews the Journal has been playing significant role in the enrichment of socio-anthropological literature of Nepal.

The Journal has succeeded in publishing 341 articles and 80 book-reviews in its 23 volumes of 47 issues. A systematic cumulative index to Vol. 1-12 (1973-1985) of the Journal was compiled and published in the Issue No.3 of Vol.12 of the Journal. The Cumulative Index has been brought up to date in the following pages by indexing Vol.13 to 23 (1986-1996) of the Journal, which contain 162 articles and 41 book-reviews. With a view to helping a user of the Journal quickly find information of his interest in the pages of the Journal, the Cumulative Index lists all the 162 articles in classified order, and the classified list is appended with alphabetical Author-Title and Subject indexes at the end. The Subject distribution of 167 articles is found to be as shown in the following chart:



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